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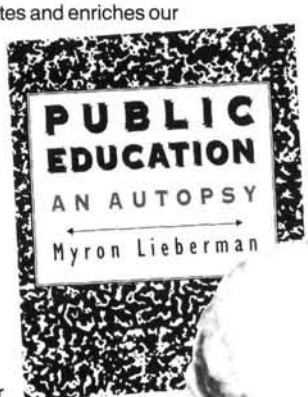

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

JANUARY 3, 1994

FOUNDED 1914
WASHINGTON, D.C.
ISSUE 4,120

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THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 210, Number 1, Issue 4,120, January 3, 1994. (Printed in the U.S. on December 15, 1993.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 10 & 17, July 18 & 25, Aug. 22 & 29, and Sept. 19 & 26, 1994) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. The New Republic Advertising Sales Office (212) 702-4882. Yearly subscriptions, $69.97; foreign, $99.97; Canada, $84.97. Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage & handling). © 1994 by The New Republic, Inc. (ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Microform, CD-ROM, issue and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Internet mail address: editors@tnr.com Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscribers: Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 602, Mount Morris, IL 61054. For subscription problems call 800-827-1289.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Cooper vs. Clinton

To the editors:

What a stupid idea! I refer, of course, to the Cooper health care plan and your editorial endorsement of same under the "New Democrat" aegis ("For the Cooper Plan," December 6).

Obviously, none of you has lived lately on the $21,000 per year at which the Cooper Plan expects families of four to pay a monthly subsidized health insurance premium of $167, not to mention an average of $66 per month in likely deductibles and even more in co-payments. A family earning $21,000 takes home about $1,600 per month after Social Security and taxes. Out of that a humble rent may be $400, utilities another $200 and a car payment with gas and insurance another $300 or so. That leaves the family $700 per month for everything else: groceries, clothes, furniture, life insurance, retirement savings, vacations, birthdays and, well, you get the picture.

It's mighty smug of you to declare that this family ought to be "responsible" enough to cut their $700 down to $467 per month in order to pay their slightly subsidized health insurance premiums and deductibles. After all, they can live on beans and potatoes, ignore birthdays and shop exclusively at the Salvation Army. But face it, few healthy families are going to have the discipline to live this austerely. Then, when catastrophe does strike, the family will be right back at the emergency room, uninsured. America's health care crisis will persist—with the added ugliness of labeling the uninsured "irresponsible."

And consider what even a successful Cooper Plan would do to the hope of home ownership for low-income Americans. A family earning $21,000 per year and carrying a $200 car payment couldn't qualify for a mortgage on a cardboard box in the park. But never mind, living on $467 per month they couldn't save the down payment anyway.

And need I remind you that $21,000 per year translates into a full-time job paying $10.50 an hour? For lots of people that's a pretty good wage, representing some skills, responsibility and advancement. Pass the Cooper Plan and you will pull the economic rug out from under these millions of Americans.

KENNETH E. MORRIS
Athens, Georgia

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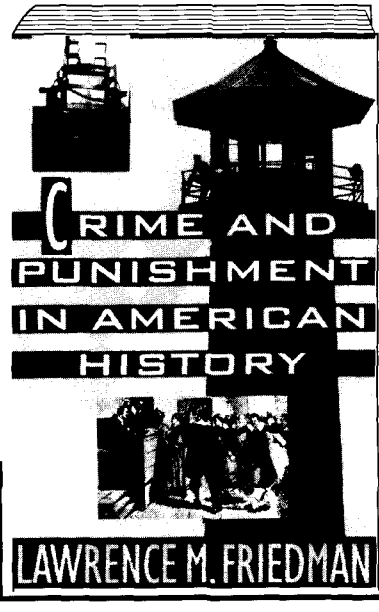

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Lazy

To the editors:

Michael Maren's "Spinning Dunkirk" (December 6) is another in a series of articles about Somalia by one more lazy journalist reporting from what the locals in Mogadishu call the "Media Hotel." By now, many Americans know that Somalia is the size of Texas. Maren, in his article, admits that he didn't get out of Mogadishu. Yet he confidently reports that "around Somalia people expect the civil war to start again" and "Somalia's warlords are preparing for round two" and "all over Somalia ... people are complaining," etc. Would you publish an article on what people said and thought from Galveston to Amarillo if your reporter never left Austin?

In April, as a special consultant to the State Department on how to rebuild the Somali Police and Judiciary, I did travel "all over Somalia." Crops were growing and the police and some courts were functioning in Bardera and Baidoa, two points of the "triangle of death," where thousands had died earlier due to anarchy and civil war. Recently in Kismayo, after months of discussion, the elders of two warring factions reached an agreement to end their fighting and establish a civil administration. The northeast area, from Galkayo to Bosasso, was relatively stable and has been for the past two and a half years, due in part to a popular regional administration and a functioning but poorly equipped regional police. The North recently held regionwide elections and chose a former prime minister as president of the self-proclaimed Somaliland Republic. More than 6,000 militia have been disarmed in the north and await retraining in Mandera as police.

If Maren wants to report on what is going on in Somalia, he has to get out of Mogadishu. Otherwise, his uninformed generalizations are a waste of time.

MARTIN R. GANZGLASS
Washington, D.C.

Pulp

To the editors:

Alexander Star's article on Philip K. Dick's fascinating work was intriguing and vastly informative ("The God in the Trash," December 6). But there is yet another dimension to Dick's dark vision. Obsessed as he was with postmodern malaise, technological and spiritual entropy and the "psychic strains of postindustrial capitalism," Dick was certainly a subversive innovator in science fiction, bringing a prophetically dark pessimism to the field. Yet, in some fundamental ways he seems to be not so

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much a science fiction writer as a more sophisticated artistic heir of pulp gothic horror artists such as H. P. Lovecraft.

While this may seem blasphemous to Dick's admirers, the comparison is not as inapt as it may appear. Dick started in paperback pulps and in many ways never left them. Like Lovecraft, who fashioned his own unique fantasy-Victorian world of decay, deterioration and despair, and speculated on deranged, hallucinogenic mental states and his own warped irrealism, Dick seems to have done something similar for postwar American suburbia, imagining gloomy, postmodern horror tales using the new technological and physiological realities.

The similarities are there. Lovecraft specialized in bewildered, helpless protagonists buffeted by nameless forces of supernatural dread about to engulf them, and chronicled their predicaments in the purplest of prose. The term "tomb world" virtually defines Lovecraft's pulp universe. Dick's fallen suburban "tomb world" has much of Lovecraft's pulp horror sentiment, if not Poe's, except that the source of nameless dread and paranoia is a more familiar, domestic one, and the sense of paralysis and irreality more trenchant and disturbing than Lovecraft's prison house of radio supernaturalism. Dick's lost souls flounder in the grip of a nexus of debilitating modern madnesses, both internal and external. But Philip K. Dick was undoubtedly working in an old tradition of pulp horror, Lovecraft especially, as much as science fiction, modernizing and revitalizing known territory. At bottom, there is something basically adolescent about Dick's vision, as there was in Lovecraft's pulp. Marxists and other trendies should probably go back to "Weird Tales" for illumination on this master of "late capitalist" horror fiction.

MARK SCHAFFER
Frederick, Maryland

So old

To the editors:

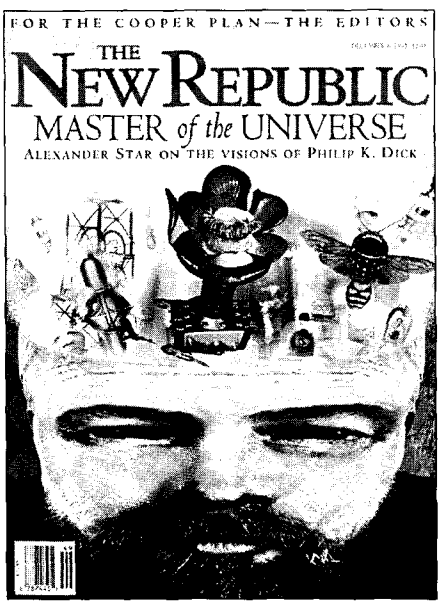
That our century is so old that Professor Isaac Kramnick should find it an appropriate introduction to ask, "... first, who was Harold Laski?" ("Our Harold," December 6) calls for the anecdote that the late Taslim O. Elias told during an interview at the International Court of Justice in 1989. When asked, at one of the London gatherings that the judge, then the attorney general of Nigeria, loved to attend, "Who are you?," the writer answered "Harold Laski." What do you do? was the next question, to which he replied, "I'm Harold Laski." But what profession are you in? was the follow-up query, to which the answer was, with some asperity, "I am Harold Laski."

HOWARD N. MEYER
New York, New York

Brutish

To the editors:

John Finnis's "Disintegrity" argument against homosexual conduct ("Is Homosexual Conduct Wrong? An Exchange," by John Finnis and Martha Nussbaum, November 15) misses both the joy of true human companionship and the point of joining together at all. When all is said and done it is "procreation" that is the solitary "good" of the Finnis calculus shaping his idea of correct sexual conduct.



Finnis takes us back to the strange days of St. Thomas, who equated human sexuality with brutish animal reproductive mating and viewed sex with one's mother as better than homosexual love or masturbation because of the reproductive potential in the former and the absence of it in the latter, and to Clement of Alexandria who, as a Doctor of the Church, taught that it was gravely sinful for older married couples to engage in lovemaking after fecundity. How odious to the dignity of women. Are women nothing but baby machines to be used by men as such?

Finnis misses the majesty of true sexuality (contrasted to mere self-gratifying sexual satiation, same sex or otherwise, something that has its own, but very different, ethical problems); its earthiness; its mystical and exalted power of momentary union between two humans; its capability of ameliorating the natural aloneness of the human condition; and its ability to replenish the human soul. His "orgasmic union" seems to be one-dimensional, avoiding the richness of deep sexual practices between loving couples that cannot possibly result in conception. He has demeaned the dignity of women and aligned himself with the likes of Thomas and Clement, who viewed human sexuality in the same light as grunting animals in heat. Despite all of his philosophic stridency, Finnis has put the human down in the barnyard mud with the male on top.

Finnis's "friendship," or as the late Allan Bloom put it, the deep "connection" between two humans and its alleviation of their loneliness, is the real good of human union. Eric Fromm said it well: "The deepest need of man ... is the need to overcome his separateness, to leave the prison of his aloneness." The answer, suggests Fromm, is the achievement of fusion with another person in love. It makes little difference if that other person is of the same sex if that fusion, that connection, with its deep sexual extension, is truly made and man, along with his companion (male or female) can free himself from the prison house of his loneliness.

JAMES G. SWEENEY
Monroe, New York

To the editors:

In his argument against homosexuality John Finnis writes, "In masturbating, as in being masturbated or sodomized, one's body is treated as instrumental for the securing of the experiential satisfaction of the conscious self."

Same with kissing. Long live disintegration.

ANDY LAMEY
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Second-rate

To the editors:

Your beloved No. 2 pencils may not be endangered but it seems No. 1s are extinct ("A Rub-out?" by Henry Petroski, December 6). I haven't been able to find one in a store for five years. Has the formula for altering the proportions of graphite and clay into different degrees of hardness been misplaced or have my No. 1s gone the way of the quill pen?

WILLIAM M. STERNBERG
New York, New York

The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Letters should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be held to under 200 words. Letters may be edited for space. Please address letters to: Correspondence, TNR, 1220 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Miracle Worker?

When it comes to making exaggerated claims for what they've accomplished, educators are real pros. In most fields, people making a notable discovery are careful not to claim too much for it. Medical researchers who discover a new drug or procedure are scrupulous about specifying the percentage of people likely to find it effective, and even a success rate of 10 or 15 percent is considered an achievement.

Educating kids is more difficult than keeping them healthy, so it would be reasonable to expect success rates for new education programs or techniques to be more modest. Educators, however, seem to think that, unless they claim a 100 percent success rate, their discovery will not be taken seriously. So they don't say what medical researchers do—this works for some people under some circumstances, it may have these side effects, and we are continuing our research. Educators speak in terms of *panaceas, magic bullets* and *miracles.*

Seymour Fliegel, who worked for a number of years in East Harlem, New York City's District 4, is a good example of this tendency to overclaim. Fliegel was appointed by Anthony Alvarado, the district superintendent who actually originated the alternative schools program in District 4. Alvarado does not claim that choice and competition among public schools in District 4 created a miracle; Fliegel does. In fact, that is the name of the book Fliegel has written: *Miracle in East Harlem: The Fight for Choice in Public Education* (New York: Random House, 1993).

Fliegel is especially fond of talking about Benjamin Franklin High School, which he says was the worst in the city. The school board shut it down in 1982, and it was reopened as the Manhattan Center for Science and Math, a public school of choice. According to Fliegel, a miracle happened. By 1986, there was a 96 percent graduation rate and 100 percent went on to college. That is an impressive achievement, but there is less to it than meets the eye.

The students in the old Benjamin Franklin were the ones no other high school in Upper Manhattan wanted. But when the school reopened as a school of choice, it did not have the same students. Kids who were interested in specializing in science and math submitted applications; they and their parents were interviewed; and the school was able to reject the kids it didn't think would make it. As Fliegel says, the school was aiming for youngsters in a certain category of achievement—not the ones who get into highly selective schools like Stuyvesant or Bronx Science but not the bottom of the barrel either.

When miracles happen, they happen incrementally, in places where people work constantly and over the long term to build on their advances and correct their mistakes.

Obviously student performance was much improved: Students graduated and got into college instead of dropping out in droves. But these kids were an entirely different group from the ones who had attended Benjamin Franklin.

Someone once asked former governor of Georgia Lester Maddox about improving the state's prison system. He replied that what the system needed was a better class of prisoner. That's the "miracle" Fliegel is really talking about. Choice enabled those running Manhattan Center to get a better class of student.

In "What School Choice Really Means" (*Atlantic Monthly*, November 1992), David Kirp points out other things about the District 4 successes that Fliegel ignores. How much of the success that some schools enjoyed was due to the extraordinary amount of federal and other grant money they attracted? How much to the quality of leadership in some schools?

Kirp also looks at the downside of choice. Choice, he says, is not a panacea; it is not a way of making sure all students get an excellent education. There are some very good schools in East Harlem because students compete to get into them—and the schools choose the students they want to have. But the truth, Kirp says, is that this system of winners also has losers: "At the bottom of the heap are schools that virtually [no students]...would choose. These get the hundreds of children who are left over after the more successful schools have made their picks."

There was no miracle at the Manhattan Center for Science and Math or any other school that Fliegel touts. When miracles happen, they happen incrementally, in places where people work constantly and over the long term to build on their advances and correct their mistakes. If you want to see a place where that's happening, it's District 2, where Anthony Alvarado is now superintendent.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1993 by Albert Shanker.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

JANUARY 3, 1994

WHAT WORKS

During the 1992 campaign, Bill Clinton did not just promise to "end welfare as we know it." That faux-radical phrase could mean almost anything. Clinton promised much more. He said he wanted to "break the permanent culture of dependence which embraces 20 to 25 percent of those on public assistance." To this end, he offered a specific plan: after two years on welfare, "those who can work will have to go to work, either by taking a job in the private sector or through community service."

Much of the promise of Clintonism is bound up in this proposal. It signaled that, finally, a Democrat was ready to confront America's most pressing social problem—the mainly black, mainly urban, underclass. Clinton's plan combined conservative hardheadedness with a liberal commitment to government activism. And its scope seemed to match the task at hand. Clinton talks a bit too easily about changing "culture," but it's hard to see how his plan wouldn't dramatically alter life in the ghetto. Young girls would know that if they made the disastrous decision to become unwed mothers, they would not be supported indefinitely by government checks. They might then begin to make better choices—postponing childbirth, getting married, joining the labor force.

Clinton will soon decide what his welfare legislation will actually look like. Republicans are smugly predicting that paleoliberal interest groups such as the Children's Defense Fund will pick apart any plan. We are more optimistic. The politics of welfare—especially the mood of elite opinion—has shifted significantly over the past decade. In 1984 Charles Murray was vilified for arguing that welfare sustains the underclass. Now his views are cited respectfully by anchormen (and by Clinton). Only a few days ago Wisconsin decided to withdraw from the federal welfare system and create its own public relief program by 1999.

That isn't to say Clinton can't blow this opportunity for reform. The tentative proposals of his welfare task force, as leaked to *The New York Times*, suggest three trouble spots. The first, and most obvious, is the possibility that Clinton will weaken his pledge that after two years "those who are able must go to work"—for example, by expanding the definition of people deemed "unable" to work, or exempting large numbers of recipients enrolled in training programs. Will there be a serious penalty for refusing to work? Current law authorizes only a relatively small reduction in benefits ($40 a month in Arkansas, out of $496 in monthly benefits). Clinton could also undermine his plan by failing to finance it. Most everyone agrees it is unfair to make welfare mothers work unless they are offered day care for their children. But day care is expensive. If the government doesn't spend the money, the work requirement can't be enforced.

The second mistake, then, would be to spend too little. If, as the leaked documents suggest, Clinton is insisting on a "deficit neutral" plan, the result could be disastrous. Under any serious two-years-and-work scheme—even one with mild sanctions—*some* mothers who fail to work will wind up on the streets. A responsible plan must anticipate this, offering food, shelter, counseling for the mothers and, if necessary, humane (and costly) orphanages for their children.

Finally, there is the question of what sorts of jobs welfare recipients will have to take. Private-sector jobs are preferable, of course, and the Clintonites are hatching all sorts of schemes to subsidize private positions. The track record of such schemes is dismal, however. Even if they are wildly successful, hundreds of thousands of welfare recipients will eventually hit the two-year "wall" without finding private employment. They will need public jobs performing public services. If Clinton resists creating such WPA-style jobs because they are expensive, because they seem too "Old Democrat" or because public employee unions fear the competition, his plan will fail.

Revealingly, the radicalization of the public on the welfare issue is mirrored in the changing arguments made *against* sweeping reform. Opponents of "getting tough" used to claim that requiring work was gratuitous. Recipients wanted to work, we were told. The problem was the lack of jobs. Today, this argument has given way to its opposite: we can't expect welfare mothers to work because many (a quarter? a third?) are incapable of working even if offered jobs. But this is simply another way of saying there is a ferociously entrenched culture of poverty. It is itself the clearest possible demonstration that the current system is intolerable. Clinton needs a plan forceful enough to match the reality of the underclass. •

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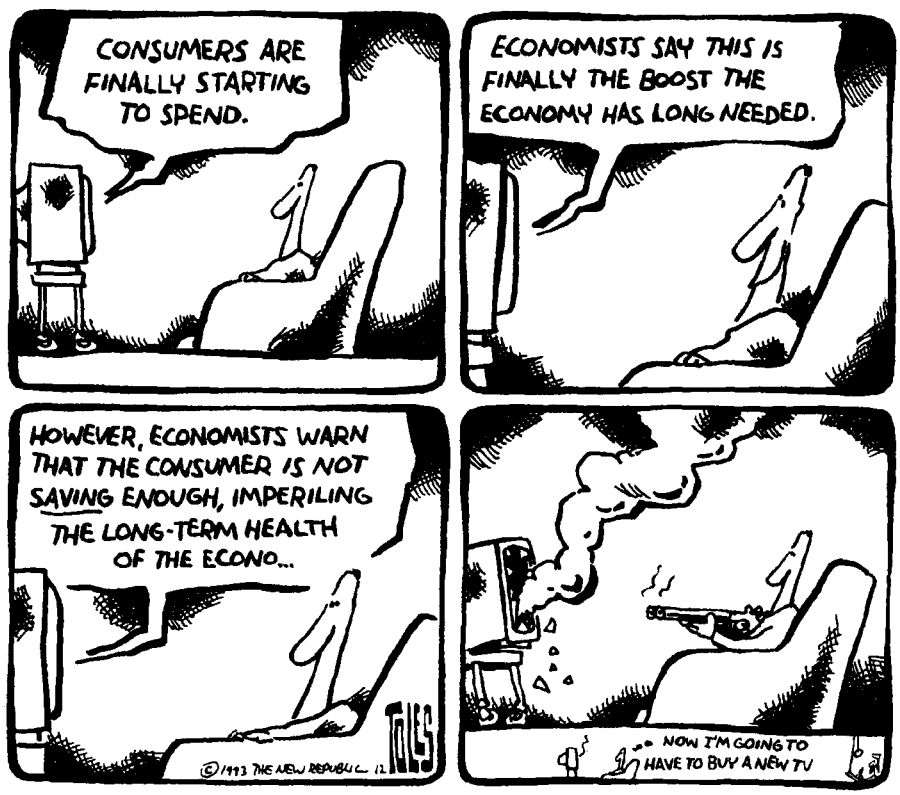
NOTEBOOK

SILVER CLOUD, DARK LINING: As expected, Judge H. Jeffrey Bayless this week struck down Colorado's anti-gay rights amendment as a denial of the "fundamental right" of gays and lesbians to participate in the political process. Publicly, gay leaders are hailing the decision as a victory. Unfortunately, however, the legal reasoning of the decision could not be more disappointing for those who hope for ultimate success before the Supreme Court. Bayless refused the plaintiffs' invitation to make specific factual findings that there is no "rational basis" for discrimination against gays and lesbians. Traditionally, the Court is deferential to the factual conclusions of lower courts; and the rational basis theory would have provided the most secure alternative grounding for gay rights if the justices overturn Bayless's "political participation" theory, as they are likely to do. More encouragingly, Bayless's opinion contains no references to Greek vase painting or Thomist views on masturbation.


CONSUMERS ARE FINALLY STARTING TO SPEND.
ECONOMISTS SAY THIS IS FINALLY THE BOOST THE ECONOMY HAS LONG NEEDED.
HOWEVER, ECONOMISTS WARN THAT THE CONSUMER IS NOT SAVING ENOUGH, IMPERILING THE LONG-TERM HEALTH OF THE ECONO...
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TOLES
NOW I'M GOING TO HAVE TO BUY A NEW TV

PLUMBING AND SILENCE: Kanan Makiya's book *Cruelty and Silence: War, Tyranny, Uprising and the Arab World* has been widely and favorably reviewed, not least in these pages. It also won a prize, which carried with it the sum of $50,000. The book and its author have led a charmed life. Then a review in *The Nation* (August 9/16) suggested that the book was a knock-off of its author's opponents: Makiya, Eqbal Ahmed charged, "attacks these writers while cannibalizing their ideas." A nasty exchange appeared in the magazine's November 8 issue. We had also been struck by Makiya's borrowings from someone whose name, Fouad Ajami, appears nowhere in Makiya's book save in the footnotes (twice), and then only to cite Ajami's citation to one sentence spoken to him by the poet Adonis. But virtually the entire second part of the book and its organizing theme, "silence," are derivative of Ajami. In a long essay in THE NEW REPUBLIC ("The Silence in Arab Culture," April 6, 1987) Ajami had limned precisely this motif. Makiya incorrectly refers to this essay as "The Tragedy of Arab Culture," perhaps subconsciously admitting his debt. But if you have read *The Arab Predicament* or *Beirut: City of Regrets* or, for that matter, essays by Ajami, you would recognize in *Cruelty and Silence* many instances of, shall we say, appropriation. Here's just one. Ajami: "[Adonis and Qabbani] have been able to express what was on the minds of many, to plumb the psychological and emotional depths that most Arab intellectuals and writers have preferred to evade." And here is Makiya: "[Adonis] has plumbed psychological and emotional depths that many Arab intellectuals have avoided."

GAIL SHEEHY ALERT: "Life itself forced me to suffer from the very day, the moment, the instant of my birth. Society could give me nothing.... Two months before her death, my mother would tell me, 'Volodya, there's nothing to remember, not one happy day.'"—Vladimir Zhirinovsky, *The New York Times*, December 15, 1993

TINA SUCK-UP WATCH: "When Tina arrived, we expected a character out of Jackie Collins. Instead we got Jane Austen."—Adam Gopnik, art critic for *The New Yorker*, in *The New York Times Magazine*, December 5, 1993

HOME NEWS: With this issue, Charles Lane rejoins TNR as a senior editor. He will specialize in international affairs, with a specific focus on the future of American foreign policy. A former TNR associate editor and foreign correspondent for *Newsweek*, TNR readers know him for his dispatches from such far-flung locales as Bosnia, El Salvador, Panama and Romania. •

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GOLAN POSTCARD

WRITING ON WALLS

By Stuart Schoffman

Outside of Jericho, at the low end of the long, bumpy ride up the Jordan Valley to the Sea of Galilee, the graffiti on abandoned buildings pass by like Burma-Shave signs: "We're Not Budging from the Golan"; "The Nation Is with the Golan"; "'Transfer' for the Jews of the Golan?" But as you pass Kibbutz Ein Gev on the Galilee's eastern shore—which for decades furnished target practice for Syrian snipers—and climb onto the Golan Heights above, the scrawlings become more pointed: "Only A Drunk Would Withdraw from the Golan" and "Begin Is Waiting for Rabin," with a drawing of a coffin.

Michael Ben-Chorin, 45, claims credit for some of the anti-Rabin slogans, but won't tell me which ones are of his doing. "With graffiti," he says, "the wall speaks, not the author." An engaging chap who trained as an aeronautical engineer and thinks the Palestinians should be "transferred" to Saudi Arabia, he has lived since 1975 in Nov, a spartan religious settlement in the southeastern Golan. He grows myrtle bushes, whose twigs he markets for ceremonial use on the Sukkot holiday.

Extremists like Ben-Chorin are more rare up here than in Judea and Samaria, and seem to most Israelis more benign than their counterparts to the south, largely because on the Golan there are no hostile natives with which to clash. About 80,000 Syrians, mainly soldiers, fled the area in 1967, and today 12,600 Jews, scattered among thirty-three communities and reflecting a broad ideological spectrum—a majority voted Labor and leftward—live in harmony with some 17,000 Arab villagers belonging to the non-Muslim Druze sect.

"PREPARE FOR THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH" is painted on the front gate of the sprawling concrete house that Ben-Chorin built himself. We sit at a refectory table covered with tubs of jam, loaves of bread, piles of vegetables—enough to feed his nine children, and nine more. "Yitzhak Rabin and all the leftists who are with him are reading things all wrong," he shouts in Gatling-gun Hebrew. "They think, 'Begin gave back the Sinai, Rabin will do it with the Golan.' In the Sinai it was colonialism, you never saw a Jew on a tractor. This is a war for our homes."

Like an ultra-Zionist Ken Kesey—a merry prankster in a orange knit yarmulke—Ben-Chorin musters half a dozen kids into a battered American van plastered with assorted "Save the Golan" stickers. I follow in my citified Peugeot as he swings off the main road onto a pitted ribbon of cement that a signpost wisely restricts to military traffic. Swerving onto the shoulder to avoid crater-sized potholes, I wonder if I ought to be concerned that on the roadside are yellow signs that say: "WARNING! MINES." Beyond barbed wire, cattle graze vacantly. There are 10,000 head on the Golan, and every so often one of them takes a fatal step and is blasted into shish kebab.

We pass the twisted chassis of bombed-out jeeps—impromptu military memorials—and climb a rocky dirt road and finally stop at a promontory overlooking the border. Here, Ben-Chorin says, is where Syrian tanks broke through in '73. There, he enthuses, is where Israeli rocket-firing helicopters will sweep up from the Galilee and zap them next time. Before us looms Tel Phares, one of a line of volcanic hills that are the Golan's highest ground and command Israel's border with Syria.

Would he pull out if so ordered? "There won't be a civil war here," declares Ben-Chorin evasively, "because we won't have to get to that point. But people will not leave this place. Everyone here has his own politics, but on the subject of the Golan there's no debate." The Golan is counting on consensus: locally, throughout Israel and beyond it if possible. "For Israelis, we are the normal ones," insists Shmulik Mandel, 42, a software engineer who heads the board of directors at Kibbutz Merom Golan. "How can anyone call me a right-winger? I'm a Socialist. I live on a kibbutz."

The countryside around Merom Golan, rolling hills dotted with live oaks, could pass for central Texas. At the kibbutz's Cowboy Restaurant—bar stools shaped like saddles, antlers on the wall, hummus on the menu—Shmulik and a couple of friends host a group of state legislators from Texas and Arizona. "Giving the Golan back is a risk Israel cannot take," he says. "There will be peace, but we must have patience."

In Katzrin, the Golan's largest and only city—population 4,400—I get the grand tour from Mayor Sammy Bar-Lev, a wiry man of 50 who helped found the town in 1977. Minimalls and red-roofed garden apartments give the flavor of a Spielbergian suburb. Despite all the talk of returning the Golan—or perhaps to butter up the locals before the ax falls—the government is building 700 housing units in Katzrin and paving dozens of roads in the region. "The government can't just give and take away," Bar-Lev says. "Parents who give birth to a child, do they have permission to kill it after ten years? A government is not God." To seal his case, Bar-Lev guides me through Katzrin's archaeological park—the remains of a Jewish town, built in the fourth century A.D. and destroyed by an earthquake in the seventh century—whose centerpiece is a handsome synagogue with eight basalt columns and a lintel decorated with pomegranates. He steers me to a wall where, 1,500 or so years ago, somebody carved a simple image of a menorah, the ritual candelabrum that today symbolizes the state of Israel. "We didn't invent these things," he says simply. "They were here."

If the Golan question were ever put to a nationwide

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referendum, it is far from clear how the vote would go. It was the residents of Tel Aviv and environs who were pummeled by Scuds in the Gulf war, and they badly want peace with Syria. Golan partisans tend to regard Tel Avivis as spoiled, materialistic and detached from Israel's pioneering spirit. "If the stock market in Tel Aviv fell thirty points," Shmulik says, "people there would react a lot more strongly than if the Golan were given back."

On the Golan itself, to support such a deal is downright heretical. Not many locals favor concessions; fewer still talk about it. "In terms of Israel, land for peace is the right decision," says Canadian-born Ehud Rostoker, 43, of Kibbutz Mevo Hama in the southern Golan, "but that doesn't stop people from bleeding. We've invested something here for twenty-six years, and that'll just go." I drop in on him at Hamat Gader, an implausible combination of reptile farm, Roman antiquity and hot-springs spa that is co-managed by Rostoker's kibbutz.

The Syrians built an officers' club here before 1967; an abandoned mosque sits opposite the greenish, sulfurous pools. We amble through what is left of the Roman bathhouse, in grander times an elaborate hot-to-cold setup (Caldarium, Tepidarium, Frigidarium) that drew customers from all over the Empire. "Sure, I'd like to hold on to the Golan," he says. "In an ideal world I'd love to hold on to the West Bank, too. I have all sorts of fantasies. I wish Israel was in British Columbia."

An alligator the size of a speedboat points his snout at the sun. "We're farther on the fringe than the West Bank," says Rostoker, "out of sight, out of mind. There are just a few of us, we can't create the sort of hoo-hah that the West Bank can. I think they're going to give the Golan back. I think it's been decided already. The writing is on the wall."

STUART SCHOFFMAN is a columnist for *The Jerusalem Report* and a screenwriter.

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

REV. BILL

By Fred Barnes

When President Clinton invited a dozen evangelical leaders to breakfast at the White House, his aides were anxious about Jack Hayford, pastor of the Church of the Way in Van Nuys, California. Hayford is a conservative charismatic preacher whose church is so large (8,000 parishioners) he has to shuttle between separate "campuses" a half-mile apart on Sunday mornings. Hayford is fervently opposed to abortion and gay rights. Speaking first at the breakfast, after grace, Hayford said he had had a revelation the morning after Clinton was elected in 1992. God flooded his heart with love for Clinton, he said, and convinced him to treat Clinton "on the basis that his presidency was appointed by God."

Not bad for openers, and it got better. Clinton was assured that there are many devout Christians, theologically conservative and politically liberal, who are sympathetic to him. Mark Noll, a historian at Wheaton College, said his daughter heads Young Democrats at her college and defends Clinton as "pro-life" on health care, the budget and peace. After a second helping of eggs, Clinton confessed he'd been deeply wounded by charges of the religious right suggesting his policies are un-Christian. He added that he has never lived in a city as secular as Washington (this from a guy who lived in Oxford and New Haven). When he finished, the group prayed. The session lasted ninety minutes, and Clinton got from it just what he wanted: spiritual nourishment and protection against attacks that he is a social liberal.

Is Clinton serious about this religious stuff? The evangelicals and many other religious leaders who have met with him in recent months are persuaded. In *Ministries Today*, Hayford wrote: "It may bewilder some to have it said that this man believes in the Bible and in Jesus Christ as God's Son, the Savior." Roberta Hestenes, president of Eastern College near Philadelphia, told *Religion Report*, "People asked me, sometimes mockingly, can someone be a Christian and a Democrat? And my own answer is: this president is both."

Clinton also has a deep and sincere desire to build political support inside an alienated constituency: evangelical Christians. Strict on theology and committed to spreading the faith, they are the growth sector in American Christianity. Since the late 1970s many evangelicals have become politically active, focusing chiefly on conservative social issues. Clinton's efforts have already softened some toward him. Robert Seiple, president of World Vision, a Christian relief agency, wrote associates after attending the October 18 breakfast: Christians "have tainted the credibility of the Gospel by the viciousness of these personal attacks against the president and his family. In doing so, our Gospel begins to lose its attractiveness to the non-Christian." Seiple is a Republican, a former combat pilot in Vietnam, who says he will "undoubtedly die with my Republican boots on." But he wants "civility, divinely ordained, in the midst of legitimate and understandable differences" with the president.

What's amazing is Clinton's skill in playing down those differences. The moderate evangelicals who came to breakfast were told that they were invited to discuss "religious" matters and encourage the president's faith, nothing more. So neither abortion nor gay rights came up. One evangelical told Clinton there were no "alligators" in the room, folks who would bite off his head as the Christian right has. Clinton is lucky. Ronald Reagan and George Bush couldn't have gotten away with this muzzling. In their presence, some of these same moder-

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ates would have asserted that racism, poverty, the contras, etc., were "religious" issues and had to be broached.

Clinton also gets a free ride on mixing church and state. Not only has he met frequently with religious leaders, starting with Billy Graham's overnight stay at the White House last February, but he has noisily denounced creeping secularism. Reagan and Bush would have been zinged for this, probably by religious leaders who hadn't been invited by the White House. At an interfaith breakfast in the State Dining Room on August 30, Clinton touted the book by Yale Law Professor Stephen Carter, *The Culture of Disbelief*, which argues that religion is dismissed as unimportant in America and that religious motives are regarded as suspect. "Sometimes I think the environment in which we operate is entirely too secular," Clinton said. "The fact that we have freedom *of* religion doesn't mean we need to try to have freedom *from* religion. It doesn't mean that those of us who have faith shouldn't frankly admit that we are animated by that faith." Clinton ostentatiously left a copy of Carter's book on his Oval Office desk for weeks.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The potential political payoff from courting evangelicals is significant, yet Clinton hasn't been attacked for mingling politics and religion either. One reason is that the mainstream press doesn't cover his Christian activity. Reporters aren't interested. So secular folks don't get alarmed. But the religious press plays up the sessions. Transcripts of the August session still circulate among evangelicals like samizdat. Some who have met with Clinton, such as the Reverend Richard Cizik of the National Association of Evangelicals, have issued press releases ("NAE Official Meets President, Discusses AIDS").

Clinton's embrace of evangelicals began last January. His pastor in Little Rock, Rex Horne Jr., hosted a group that met with Clinton before Inauguration Day. It included Bill Hybels of the 15,000-member Willow Creek Church outside Chicago. Clinton and Hybels hit it off, then talked again when the president visited Chicago in May. Meanwhile, Clinton asked a friend to organize meetings with religious leaders, especially evangelicals. Clinton said this was important to him as a Christian, but White House aides didn't know whom to invite.

Invitees have been carefully picked, if only to exclude Clinton antagonists. The first event, the August breakfast, was a payback to Clinton's supporters in the religious community. The eighty guests included Christians, Jews, a Buddhist, but few evangelicals. Next was a White House session, set up by Horne, with Southern Baptist leaders. This was a flop. Clinton wanted to talk about the nation's moral climate, but the Baptists insisted on challenging his support for abortion and gay rights. At one point, Clinton asked if they had anything to say on other issues. They didn't.

Then came the meeting with the dozen evangelicals, including Hybels, who had spent the night before at the White House. Clinton asked particularly that writer Philip Yancey be invited. He had read and liked a Yancey column in *Christianity Today* titled "Why Clinton Is Not Anti-Christ." On November 16 the president brought several hundred religious leaders to the South Lawn for the signing of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. Afterward, he mingled for forty-five minutes, shaking every hand. On November 29 he hosted a breakfast with thirteen clergy to talk about the church's response to AIDS. At the close, Ed Dobson, a pastor from Grand Rapids, Michigan, asked if Clinton would hold hands and pray. The president did. Dobson, notably, was a deputy to Jerry Falwell in the 1980s. He sat next to Clinton at breakfast, joking about being on the president's left.

Whatever Clinton's motives, his Christian offensive is good politics. He is drawing evangelicals toward him just as the Republican Party, stung by charges of pandering to the religious right, is pushing them away. Clinton doesn't need to recruit an army of converts. Gaining even 20 percent of the evangelical bloc amounts to millions of votes. Simply associating with evangelicals takes the edge off his social liberalism, rarely an asset in presidential politics. What's the downside? None so far. •

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America's newest racial minority.

BOXED IN

By Hanna Rosin

Reality is never black and white, but you would never know it from the United States Census. Ninety-four percent of Americans were listed as either black or white in reports from the 1990 survey. That year had fifteen different racial classifications: white, black, Indian, Aleut, ten variations of Asian/Pacific Islander and, for the first time, a new box labeled "other." But federal statistics cannot account for "other," so the 10 million people who checked that box were divvied up proportionally among the other categories.

That may soon change. Over the past six months, mixed-race activists—light brown, yellow/white and black/yellow—have been lobbying the Census Bureau for recognition through a separate box labeled "multiracial." There are already an estimated 1 million children of mixed-race marriages, and they are fast multiplying, as these marriages have quadrupled in the last twenty years to reach 1.2 million, or 2.2 percent of all marriages. The movement is spreading. At dozens of universities across the country, from Brown to the University of California–San Francisco, groups of mixed-race students are demanding recognition on application forms and in curricula.

The sixty or so multiracial groups, which have banded together under a San Francisco-based umbrella group called the Association for Multiethnic Americans, have done remarkably well on the local level: in two years, groups of parents, inspired by Susan Graham of Project RACE (Reclassify All Children Equally) in Atlanta, pushed through legislation adding a "multiracial" box on all school forms in Ohio and Illinois. In Georgia, similar legislation passed the senate unanimously and is expected to pass the house in the next session.

But when the U.S. Census Bureau announced this summer that they would include the multiracial box in a 1996 test run, minority groups revolted. The prospect that the new category would dilute their statistical strength had them clamoring in defense of the status quo. At a June hearing before the House Census Subcommittee, Billy Tidwell of the National Urban League went so far as to say a multiracial box, by splintering the black community between light-skinned and dark, would "turn the clock back on the well-being" of African Americans. Henry Derr, executive director of Chinese for Affirmative Action, challenged the multiracial groups to document "distinct disadvantagement," and concluded that "like Swedish, the category would be interesting, but not salient" for advancing minorities' civil rights.

In blurring racial lines, multiracial groups have highlighted the stubborn tendency of civil rights groups to cling to racial differences and a zero-sum mentality despite a shifting racial and ethnic landscape. Multiracial activists make no secret of their hostility to traditional racial categories. Their bane is the Office of Management and Budget's Directive 15, which sets race standards for federal statistics. It instructs people of mixed race to "choose one box which best reflects the individual's recognition in the community" when filling out the Census form. "We call this eyeballing," says Graham. "It is a totally subjective and unfair method."

Yet instead of rejecting all racial classification boxes as arbitrary, multiracial groups are seeking a box of their own. At the June hearing, Marvin Arnold, father of two biracial children, bemoaned their plight. Any child who can't see his reflection in a box suffers "monumental emotional trauma," and even "perceived psychopathology," he said. "Omission is a form of discrimination," adds Graham. "Labels are important to people."

To build a community behind the label the multiracial movement has spawned two magazines: *Interrace* (which has 25,000 readers) and *New People* (which has 2,500). Both fulminate against race-consciousness. The masthead of *New People*, subtitled "The journal for the human race," contains this disclaimer: "We continue to use [the term "race"] only to challenge conventional notions of racial classification and separation." A recent article calls Afrocentrism "a newly revived ideology of antagonistic separation of the races." Yvette Walker Hollis, the magazine's editor, heralds the multiracial category as "an act of sabotage against the pervasive overemphasis on race in this country."

Yet the words the editors and writers use to describe their vision of a new human race are drenched in the race-consciousness they try to repudiate: "I am white. My husband is black. Color has never been an issue to us," opens one recent letter to the editor. Hollis says she founded *New People* in 1990 after she could not find a mixed-race bride and groom ornament for her wedding cake. The magazine now sells them, along with a greeting card series called "Forgotten People," for the racially mixed.

Interrace has a more vigilant mission. It specializes in "outing" the rich and famous, revealing their multiracial parents and crossover love interests: in March the magazine announced that U2 bassist Adam Clayton "has a sweet tooth for a chocolate diva"—Naomi Campbell. *New People* did a summer tally of how many of *People* magazine's fifty "Most Beautiful People" this year are multiracial (four).

The leap from a subculture to a race box on the Cen-

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WHY ALL AMERICANS SHOULD SUPPORT A MORATORIUM ON IMMIGRATION

FACT: More alien workers entered the U.S. labor market in 1992 than jobs were created, according to Immigration Service and Department of Labor statistics. America's disadvantaged workers suffer disproportionately from the steady influx of low-skilled, low-wage labor. The Zöe Baird incident was only the tip of the iceberg.

FACT: The Census Bureau now projects that there will be 392 million Americans in 2050, largely because of what *The Washington Post* describes as "massive immigration." That's 65 percent more Americans than there are today, and 92 million more than the Census Bureau projected just four years ago.

FACT: Thousands of illegal immigrants enter the country every day—3 million illegal entries a year. The law admits more immigrants and other workers than the economy can absorb. Fake documents are easily obtained, providing access to benefits meant for legal residents.

Our national political leadership is apparently unaware that a majority of Americans of all ethnic backgrounds favor reduced immigration (Roper Poll, May 1992; Latino National Political Survey, December 1992). In fact, immigration policymakers seem more concerned with pleasing the special interests than doing the will of the people they are elected to serve.

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sus is a big one, however. Though a multiracial category seems to make racial accounting more accurate, Census statisticians claim it is too broad to be useful. "Who's in there? You could fit all of the U.S. in that category," says Juanita Tamaya Lott, a Census consultant. "In order to do statistical analysis we have to have mutually exclusive categories." Most Hispanics, for example, are multiracial, and they now make up 97 percent of the 10 million people who checked "other" on the 1990 Census race question. And Census officials estimate that at least 75 percent of American blacks are technically multiracial.

The race question is particularly vulnerable to inaccuracy. Unlike other Census questions, which elicit factual answers—address, income, date of birth— responses to the race box can be "wildly capricious," says Leslie Brownrigg, a researcher at the Census Bureau's Racial Statistics division. For example, population projections underestimate the number of Native Americans by 30 percent every year, as more people who used to check white begin to identify themselves as Native Americans. And in the past twenty years, the number of Hawaiians has doubled to 200,000, twice the number of births. An Urban Institute study found that by changing the definition of Hispanic, projections of that population ranged from 5.2 million to 9.6 million. To refine the multiracial category, Graham proposes limiting the definition to those who have "one essential attribute" in common: parents of different races.

This may solve the emotional bind of choosing between parents, but it is also arbitrary. For example, what box does the child of two multiracial parents mark? What's more, Graham's definition waters down the definition of race and makes it a one-generation phenomenon, more like an interest group. The box "would represent a fundamental change in philosophy, in how you define race," says Roderick Harrison, who heads the Census Bureau's Racial Statistics division.

As it is now, only about a third of the 1 million multiracial people in the United States checked "other" on the Census; a great majority of the remaining—70 percent, according to the most recent study (1980)—checked black. And while no one expects a mass exodus from the black box if a multiracial category were added, Harrison predicts that a 10 percent defection would be a reasonable estimate.

"Ten percent! Absolutely we would oppose it!" Tidwell says. "Analyze what that might *mean*." In truth, the Urban League has reason to fear. The numbers are used to measure the effectiveness of almost every aspect of affirmative action policy: the Voting Rights Act, the Fair Housing Act, employment discrimination and desegregation in the public schools, to name a few.

The multiracial box would vastly complicate how these policies are enforced. For example, no one knows how the multiracial would be counted for affirmative action programs. They could increase the number of people eligible, by allowing those with traces of nonwhite blood to be counted as minorities. They could also have the opposite effect, by weeding out the "full" minorities from the partial. Universities that included an "other" box with a write-in option on application forms last year are rumored to have used it as one factor in picking out truly underprivileged blacks for affirmative action programs. With the mushrooming of multiracial student groups on campuses in the last two years, this could easily become common practice. Either way, the traditional civil rights agenda suffers.

The multiracial groups themselves are split on the issue. Most, like Graham, avoid it, recognizing it as a lightning rod for civil rights groups. But the more outspoken, such as Candice Mills, editor of *Interrace*, oppose race-based programs. "I'm not against affirmative action. I'm just against giving something to one group because of their race." Instead, Mills advocates basing programs on income or targeting recent immigrants.

If the multiracial box is added, it could open the door to a bevy of special interests demanding recognition. At the House hearing in June, leaders from various ethnic groups lined up to make their cases before the committee. The National Council of LaRaza demanded a Hispanic race box; the Arab-American Institute, a Middle Eastern box; five other Asian splinter groups petitioned for a sub-box; and groups of Eastern Europeans, claiming to be underrepresented in the work force, complained about being lumped into the white box. Even native Hawaiians tried to break free from their designation as Native Americans with a pitch for their own box. But it won't come easy. The National Congress of American Indians opposes the move, insisting that the Hawaiians remain in their square. In a battle where numbers mean dollars, a quarter-million islanders is too rich a statistic to give up without a fight. •

In defense of John Major.

LEAVE IT TO BEAVER

By Matthew Parris

In these days of electronic news, the American observer can follow events here in Britain as they happen, but moods still travel at a sailing ship's pace. You are in danger with us, as we are with you, of catching the mood of the previous season. That mood, post-Thatcher, was Thatcherite. After her demise three years ago, we needed to grieve. But the grieving is over now. We have a new prime minister, he is better than we

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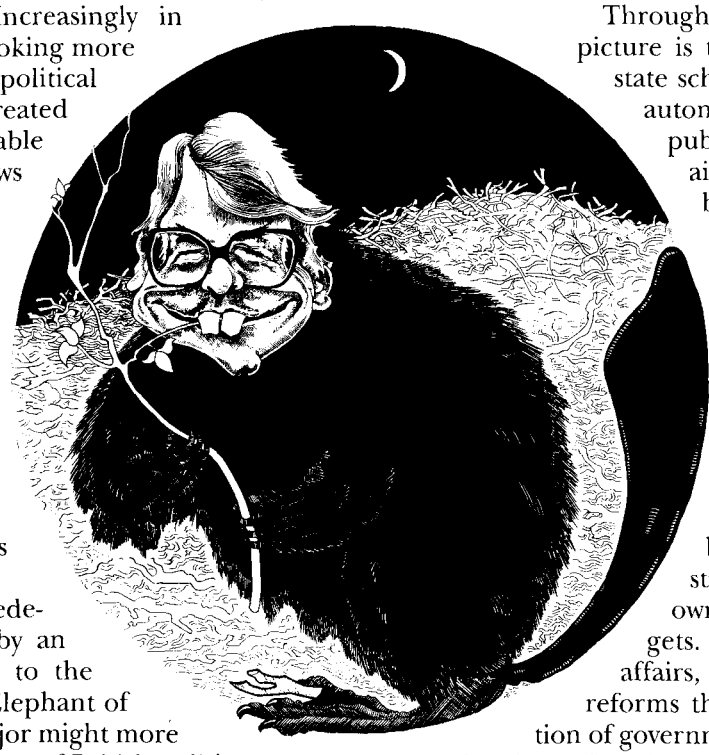
thought and people are beginning to notice.

In the United States, John Major is still portrayed in unflattering contrast to Lady Thatcher. He was "another George Bush," *The Washington Post* argued after he won the general election in 1992. "Amiable and accident-prone," *The New York Times* advised, more than a year later. "Bland and feckless," James Bowman called him in *The Washington Times*. "Mr. Wobbly," said William Safire. We are not surprised at these opinions. They are familiar, for we encounter them here, too: but at least we know where they are coming from.

Do you? The powerhouse of the "rubbish Major" campaign among certain British conservatives is what might be dubbed the "Bring Her Back" club. This is a romantic and at times eccentric miscellany of scribes and politicians, most of them at London's daily and Sunday *Telegraphs*. Increasingly in Britain these people are looking more like a cult than a serious political force, and they are being treated as such. They are not a reliable conduit for political news from Westminster.



That news may surprise you. Most Tories now believe John Major will fight the next general election; many of them believe he can win it. In this they hardly differ from Labour Party campaigners, who see Major as their most likely adversary and who do not dismiss his chances.

Who is this man? His predecessor was once likened by an appalled junior colleague to the *Indlovukazi*, or Great She-Elephant of Swazi tribal ritual. John Major might more modestly be called the beaver of British politics. He lacks any trace of exhibitionism. Nor is he a natural pugilist. He frets. He resents the press. He does not strut as a leader should. Unlike Lady Thatcher, he has a pathological reluctance to deliver the knock-out punch, and his squabbles grow the sourer for it. These are weaknesses in a leader, and more than once they have almost brought him down.

But he does work: single-mindedly and with a relentless directedness. As with the beaver, he is an intelligent cooperator, seeking and finding consensus with skill, organizing and conciliating with charm. Like the beaver, though, his power to articulate his purpose is limited, the tasks he has chosen to accomplish take time and the grand design—though it can be very grand—is rarely immediately apparent. *He* is not inspirational. His works are.

John Major has a grand design, and with more than two years' work now to survey, we can see that the design takes two parts. There is, first, a relentless continuation of the Thatcher revolution. He is nosing it, twig by twig, log by log, into places she never dared contemplate. Second, there are some gentle but quite powerful ideas about society and the state, which are very much Major's own.

Far from being a betrayer of Thatcher's economic deregulation, Major has chosen to deepen it. Profitable state enterprises having been privatized, the new prime minister is targeting the unprofitable ones. With no help from Thatcher and her friends he is closing unprofitable coal mines and has met, and weathered, a great storm this year in doing so. By dint of skill and persistence, he steered the British Rail privatization measure through both houses of Parliament. Private roads and prisons are planned. Patiently compromising where he has to, Major chews around the tree trunks until obstacles fall.

Throughout the public sector, the picture is the same. More and more state schools are opting for a semi-autonomous status within the public sector. Hospitals are aiming for the same goal, bringing market forces to bear on England's socialized medical bureaucracy. (Major is moving toward "managed competition" from the left, while Clinton is nudging toward it from the right.) Within the civil service, programs are being handed over to "agencies," free-standing bodies accountable to the state but responsible for their own management and budgets. These are policy wonk affairs, the kind of incremental reforms that, like Al Gore's reinvention of government, do not make arresting headlines. But they are critical in forcing government to be more accountable. When it's over and done with, it is imaginable that a review of 1987 to 1997—the time spanning Thatcher's last term and Major's first—might conclude that Thatcherism slackened pace in Thatcher's autumn, and gathered speed in Major's spring.

This is more than simply working through the Lady's shopping list. Major and his Cabinet are also thinking what, in her day, was unthinkable. They are questioning the long-term viability of universal state pensions; the state's involvement in housing; and whether the middle class ought to expect blanket provisions in health and higher education. The prime minister does not endorse every proposal, but he encourages people to ask the questions. Lady Thatcher, whose terror of *real* (as opposed to ephemeral) unpopularity is one of her best-kept secrets, gave sacred cow status to large parts of our welfare state and forbade all discussion of them.

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The outline of John Major's philosophy is slowly appearing. When he said he wanted a nation more at ease with itself, we wondered what he meant. Since then we have seen him turn his campaign against class into practical reforms. When he abolished the snobbish distinction between Britain's "universities" and "polytechnics," elitists sneered, but to hundreds of thousands of middle-class and working-class students it meant something. He expanded the honors system to give peerages to more ordinary people. His proposals to improve the accountability of our secret services are popular. His "Citizens' Charters," established to measure the service government officials give the public, were first derided; now they are copied. Practical changes have been small, though legion; but the *idea* that government provides a service is taking root. Major has read his David Osborne.

If what I say is true, then why has Major's stock been so low? The answer lies in both his unmemorable personal style, and in the unglamorous nature of any beaver's early, preparatory work, before the dam begins to fill. And some of the Thatcherite agenda—running down the coal industry, breaking up the railways—is intrinsically upsetting, unless and until it works. Major inherited, too, a wretched economic depression; and this was combined with the almost post-coital national depression that followed our thirteen-year fling with the Lady.

But along with that, the die-hard anti-Europeans of his party resented his pragmatic relations with the continent. Thatcher's melodramatics were more emotionally satisfying (if dangerously isolating). Over the Maastricht Treaty, Major defined a middle position, announced it and resolutely stuck to it. He is sticking to it still. As monetary union falters and Europe squabbles, much of Britain is waking up to the fact that staying on board while sticking to our gripes is not just a defensible course, but it is the only prudent one imaginable. This fall, other pieces of good fortune fell into place: the Tory Party Conference (which Major survived easily) and the recent budget (which raised taxes and saw Tory ratings rise). The recovery continues.

Then Major went to Dublin. You may have read, in America, sour British voices accusing him of plotting "betrayal." So sour is this Unionist hard core that you might be forgiven for not knowing that the British electorate applauds Major for trying to find a bridge, and will carry on applauding him for trying, even if he fails. The British public senses that if any recent politician has the initiative and conciliatory skills required to extract us from the Irish quagmire, it is Major. The prime minister's Irish venture, which led to the modest breakthrough of this week, has reminded the country of what we always suspected might be his strengths. They shouldn't be underestimated—in America or anywhere else. It's time to give the poor old bloke his due.

MATTHEW PARRIS writes for the *Times* of London.

Smearing for profit takes off.

THE OPPO BOOM

By Ruth Shalit

John Galetta liked his job as a staff assistant in President Bush's Office of National Service. "I was in charge of picking the daily Point of Light," he says. "It was fun. I was the one who got the program up and running." But after the November elections, Galetta decided it was time to try a different tack. "I wanted to hang up my own shingle," he says. So he founded TTCI Inc.—a for-profit, full-service opposition research boutique. The former Republican do-gooder now works around the clock exhuming dirt and scandal on people running for office. He pores over divorce records, shareholder suits and uniform commercial code filings. "Everyone politely despises negative campaigning," he says. "But personally, I don't see anything wrong with holding candidates accountable."

Neither does Bernadine Healey, a Republican candidate for the Ohio Senate seat being vacated by Democrat Howard Metzenbaum. In September she hired Galetta to trawl for clandestine data on Mike DeWine, her opponent in the Republican primary. The former National Institutes of Health director wasn't alone. A month later Mary Boyle, a Democratic contender for the Ohio seat, hired Shawn Garvey of the San Francisco-based Smart Campaigns Inc. to supervise her dirt-digging efforts. "My grandfather was a labor organizer," explains Garvey. "I was a young Socialist. Ten days that shook the world, all that kind of stuff." But after working for three Kennedys (Ted, Joe, Kathleen), he too made the jump to the dark side. "Times have changed," he says. "It's getting ugly out there." Garvey's company, started in 1992, is one of scores of opposition research firms now sprinkled across the country like a thousand points of spite.

With television politics and campaigns hinging more and more on the personal peccadilloes of candidates, the need for fresh dirt has spawned a cottage industry of professional life-ruiners. What used to be the handiwork of scrofulous teenagers hacking away in the basement of party headquarters is now performed by top-dollar "consultants" in Italian suits. "We're identifying good people, training them, counting on them," says Mike Plante of the Charleston, West Virginia-based Cunningham, Plante & Associates. "You try to pay them well and keep them. We're talking about getting folks up into the $50,000 range, if they stay around. I think the market will bear that. For many of them, this is the first step to becoming political consultants."

He might be right. According to *Campaigns and Elec-*

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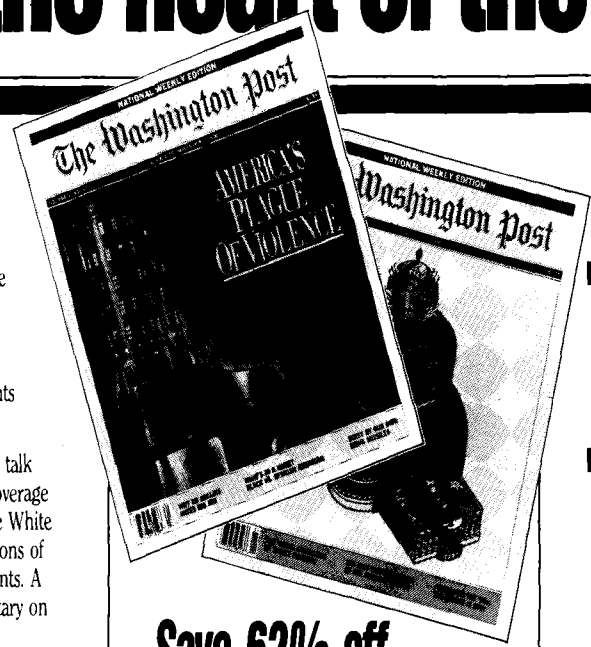

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tions magazine, opposition research is now the fastest-growing discipline among campaign professionals. In 1990 the magazine began listing opposition research firms as a separate category in its annual index of political vendors. Since then, the field has tripled in size (This year's index listed seventy-five oppo firms). "When I started in consulting, there were only one or two people who did this professionally," says Democratic political consultant Robert Squier. "Now I can't imagine any race—state assembly, state party chair, big-city mayoral contests—run without outside research consultants." And the campaigns are willing to pay top dollar. The preliminary results of a survey by *Campaigns and Elections* Editor Ronald Faucheux indicate that office-holders will dole out $16 million for opposition research during the 1994 election cycle alone.

Boasting nine full-time staffers and three stringers, Garvey's firm will take a cleaver to some fifty candidates next year. "I can fax you our proposal," he says. "It outlines our ideology of research. We have five tiers." Beginning with "the really nasty stuff, the cheap shots"—traffic tickets, liens outstanding, cellular phone receipts—"we just keep going up the ladder."

Richard Biltmeyer, research director for the National Republican Senatorial Committee, runs his own firm, RDB Associates, on the side. He too has a vision. "Friends of the cause sit around and write software," he says. "We have a vote database on every Democrat. The minute I get a vote, it is formatted and explained in the database, in categories, with attack themes. 'Perks.' 'Pay.' 'Turns back on working families.' I summarize it. I give it to the media people. They give it to the campaign manager. They've got their campaign in a box."

It's an expensive box. Biltmeyer charges $10,000 per study. Garvey, meanwhile, takes in between $20,000 and $25,000 for his five-tier onslaughts. This is comparatively cheap. David Hill of the Houston-based Hill Research Associates bills $100 per hour for projects that stretch out for months. "There's no way to make it go faster," sighs Hill, who is currently shadowing Lawton Chiles for Florida gubernatorial hopeful Jeb Bush. "So much information keeps filtering in. It all requires follow-up work. You're constantly integrating new material. You can keep following trails until the sun goes down."

Such persistence is a virtual necessity, says Alex Castellanos of National Media Inc. "Boring, annoying, wonk-fact ads are bombing. If a politician is viewed as having his hand in the till, that's what really gets people going. But for that you have to go through campaign finance documents. Divorce papers. Tax records. You have to go on-site." That's where the research divisions of the party committees fall short. "We provide our candidates with public-record research," says Michael Meahan, spokesman for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. "Funny votes and funny quotes. There's a limit to how much the committees can do."

In the past, candidates in search of juicier fare turned to private investigators—and the efforts often came back to haunt them. In 1990 Wisconsin gubernatorial candidate Jim Loftus was run out of town after news leaked that he had hired an investigator to look at Governor Tommy Thompson's relationship with dog track operators. Private eyes, too, have started to balk at political work. "I won't do it anymore," says Ken Cummins, a Washington P.I. hired by the Clinton campaign to look into allegations of impropriety surrounding Bush family finances. "I think a lot of firms feel the same way. The other side starts doing oppo on you. They look at your client list and phone records. They figure out who your principals are. You get investigated."

This is where the new industry comes in. Imagine political consultants' relief at ceding the muckraking to a team of briefcase-toting professionals. "We really don't do much opposition research anymore," says Peter Lindstrom, research director of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee. "We subcontract it out. We'd rather let the consultants do it." Dan Carroll, a former DNC research chief who left the committee to start his own oppo firm, agrees that "the difference is all in how you sell it. When I think of private eyes, I think of going through people's garbage, invading their privacy. If you throw around terms like 'private eye,' you can make points against a candidate. If it's an opposition research firm doing it, it's not as sinister sounding. The issue is how it's done and how it's spun."

Not surprisingly, most of today's opposition researchers see themselves not as gumshoes, but as gurus. Far from hiding behind trench coats, they promptly return reporters' phone calls, freely discuss current clients and are generally more than willing to supply examples of their own clout and guile. "We're not just looking for dirt," insists Hill. "We provide strategic insight on how to run a campaign." Adds Garvey: "We see ourselves as consultants first and researchers second. Campaigns are increasingly coming to rely on us to do their entire strategic plan."

And some other things, too. "We specialize in the public record," says Michael Segal of the Advanced Research Group in Cambridge. "Now, that public record might include controversial records." That's one way of putting it. "We actually go into courthouses," brags Ray Strother of the Washington-based Strother Ltd., who has done work for Senators Lloyd Bentsen, John Breaux and Dennis DeConcini. "We check land transfers, police records, lawsuits. We look at credit records." Says Lindstrom: "I have found that the private consultants are less than scrupulous in the way this stuff gets used." All the same, he says he recommends the boutique firms to candidates "wanting to go above a basic level" of research. "I refer to it as spitballing," he says. "Sometimes it sticks. Sometimes it doesn't."

Despite a professed distaste for cloak-and-dagger tactics—"We'll leave that to the divorce lawyers," he says—one of the spitballers is Shawn Garvey. In 1992 the California Democratic Party hired his firm to dig up Republican scandal and intrigue in each of its thirty-eight state, legislative and congressional races. The results were not encouraging. Combing through arrest

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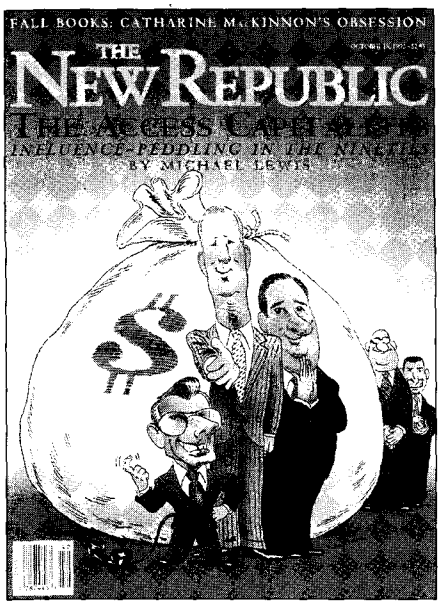

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records at the county courthouse, Garvey's operatives stumbled across the name Carol Rowan in association with a DWI violation. Since their candidate David Roberti was running against a Carol Rowan for a state Senate seat, they blanketed the state with direct-mail flyers informing voters about the charge. It turned out to be the wrong woman.

They also accused state Assemblyman Bernie Richter, a conservative Christian, of trafficking in pornographic videotapes. Alas, the pornographer turned out to be one Bernie Z. Richter, who lived in an entirely different county. Finally, the California Democrats accused Republican senatorial nominee Bruce Hershensohn of visiting a newsstand called *Centerfold World* and a strip joint, The Seven Veils. "We learned that Hershensohn frequented all of these weird sex places and corner booth places," says Garvey. "We didn't analyze it. But I did tell [Democratic State Party Chair] Bob Mulholland, and it did get used." An angry Hershensohn denied the charges, but they stuck. "He was running as a right-winger, a moralist," says Karen Olick, chief of staff to Hershensohn opponent Barbara Boxer. "We were just pointing out the contradictions. And it worked."

The oppo specialists have developed elaborate marketing schemes to coax politicians into buying their product. If a potential client begs off an opposition study, citing hopes of a positive campaign, oppo researchers will hint at the evil designs of his opponent. The oppos will then offer to scour the candidate's own record for issues that could be exploited. If the candidate agrees to the "vulnerability study," the consultants will spend the next several months telling him about his weaknesses. After lying awake in bug-eyed alarm, the politician usually consents to a study on his opponent—if only for defensive reasons. "The vulnerability study is sort of an entrée to more research," admits Galetta. The term in vogue is "innoculation."

Plante elaborates on this principle. "I have to do a sales job to candidates," he explains. "You never want to be attacked by an opponent and not be ready for it. And sometimes the best response is an offense. As my candidates see the stakes involved, they begin to understand this." Plante, a Harvard-educated seminarian, points with pride to his efforts in the 1992 Wisconsin Democratic Senate primary. His firm did the oppo for Representative Jim Moody; local business magnate Joseph Checota hired the Wisconsin firm Carrier, Christofferson & Associates. "Jim Moody is a very fine person," Plante explains. "He didn't have an arrogant bone in his body. He said over and over again, 'I don't want to go negative.'" But after Plante's vulnerability study on Moody discovered a delinquent tax warrant for $4.13, he had little choice. "If you're weak in certain areas, you have to take that issue away from your opponent," he says. "You have to find similar weaknesses in their background. We suspected tax warrants on Congressman Moody would be a prime area of attack against him."

Moody empowered Plante to spend several weeks poring over Checota's economic interest statements, land records and Securities and Exchange Commission reports. "We found some grievous sins," says Plante. So the Moody campaign launched a pre-emptive ad campaign against Checota. The businessman fired back with negative ads of his own. "Over the course of a week, the two of them went from having almost all of the votes to having almost none of the votes," says Plante. The primary—and the race—was won by Russell Feingold, the candidate without an opposition researcher. But Plante doesn't seem to mind. "When the campaign started, [Checota's company] Universal Medical was traded at $22 per share," he says. "Just recently somebody faxed me an article. It's down to forty-seven cents a share. I feel proud to have been part of that campaign."

Strother has war stories of his own. "I try very hard not to use anything personal," he says. "Often just having the club is enough. It's like nuclear deterrence—you don't fire your missile, I don't fire mine." How does this work in practice? "You pick up gossip," he says. "A couple of years ago, the police responded to a wife-beating complaint against an opponent of ours. We followed it up, because we had done a vulnerability study on our guy, and it turned out he had a DWI arrest. Well, there was a tootsie involved. A new wife, and she was very angry. She would've talked. So one of our staffers met one of his staffers in a bar and whispered, 'We have this information. We don't intend to use it unless....' And we were able to keep our opponent from talking about the DWI."

No wonder everyone is investigating everyone else. Last month, Oliver North signed a contract with the Arlington-based Terry Cooper Political Research Inc. to do some "exploratory" work for his possible Virginia Senate bid. Meanwhile, Dan Carol of Dan Carol & Associates is spearheading OLLIEPAC (Operation Last Laugh Independent Expenditure PAC), a group of "concerned citizens" that has joined together to do opposition research on North. All of the candidates for the RNC chairmanship last winter hired "op shops" to investigate each other. Even the hopelessly amicable Bill Clinton, it seems, has fallen prey. The DNC hired Matt Dorsey, formerly with The Research Group Inc., to dig up dirt on opponents of the president's health care plan. "When the national health care campaign was formed, the decision was made to have an opposition research department that would track all the institutional opponents of the president's health care plan," explains Dorsey, speaking from DNC headquarters.

"There's not much difference between what we do here and what Shawn [Garvey] does on candidates. We're trying to expose ulterior motives, to diminish credibility." Who is he investigating? "The AMA is a big one. The National Federation of Independent Businesses is also potentially dangerous. They've been hitting the president's plan for employer mandates. Also the Gramm plan. The Nickles plan. The Cooper plan." Dorsey's oppo apparatus is wired in to the grass roots. "When a group in the field takes a hit from some opposition group, they'll call us up and say, 'Who are these guys?' We're never unprepared. We must have 350, 400 files on all these different groups." And no doubt they on him. •

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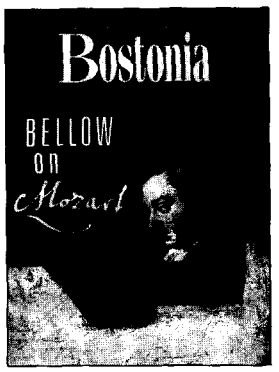

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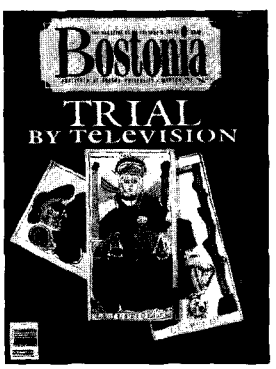

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Why liberals should love the Salvation Army.

GOOD SOLDIERS

By Sallie Tisdale

The red shield with a white letter "S," red kettles at Christmas, fresh-faced young women in bonnets, street-corner brass bands. Each image means only one thing, and each is likely to evoke more amusement than respect. The Salvation Army is so conspicuous as to be invisible to most people, almost as invisible as the average person served in its kitchens and shelters. I've seen the red shield on the big white building down the street from my house, on the stately stonework of the New York headquarters on Fourteenth Street, on the architectural gloss of a new building in Santa Monica, and until recently I never paid attention. I thought of the Salvation Army as little more than a chain of thrift stores—a quaint and rather austere organization of indeterminate size.

I am not a Christian and never have been, but I think of Jesus every time I pass a storefront mission and see men curled up in doorways, families lined up outside. "The least among you," He said. I am glad, when I pass the soup kitchens, that someone is doing something. I am guilty because I do too little. I am puzzled because I'm not always sure what I could and should do. But to tackle homelessness and end-stage alcoholism with cornets and a Bible reading, as I believed the Salvation Army to do, seemed rather naive. What I mostly didn't do with the Salvation Army—and do now—is take it seriously.

The Army is far larger than most people realize, claiming more than 5 million members in ninety-nine countries. Last year, it raised $726 million from private donations in the United States, more than any other nonprofit organization. (The Christmas kettles alone brought in $61 million.) All money raised locally is used locally. One of the principles of charity outlined in Army literature is that any social plan "must be on a scale commensurate with the situation with which it proposes to deal." In the United States last year the Army served at least 69 million free meals and provided shelter for 9.5 million homeless people.

These are, and should be, dazzling numbers, easily outstripping the income and services provided by other charities struggling directly with poverty. Certainly the Army is one of the most efficient, spending eighty-seven cents of every donated dollar on its service programs. In the name of bringing the poor and hungry up from the gutter to independence, the Salvation Army offers food and shelter, employment services, drug and alcohol recovery programs, a nationwide missing persons service, homes for pregnant women, shelter for battered women and their children, nursing care for people with AIDS, day-care centers, toy giveaways at Christmas, clothing, prison programs, hospitals, legal aid, various forms of counseling and, always, as much religion as anyone wants.

The Salvation Army is an evangelical church. Its charity is not simply service for service's sake, but service to people so much in need they cannot hear the word of the Salvationists' God. In 1992 the Army counted 133,833 "Decisions for Christ" by people attending worship or receiving charity. The Army's target has always been the most disadvantaged and the most reviled. In a way, the Salvation Army has tried to *be* the poor.

Though the Army can invoke in the thoughtful outsider an uncomfortable ambivalence, a careful reading of its policies reveals surprising layers of intelligence, tolerance and joy. My own cultural politics are far to the left of the Army's. My growing respect for it comes from the fact that the daily behavior of Salvationists is often more political and far to the left of my own. They preach and pray about the suffering of the world, but most of all, what Salvationists do in the face of suffering is act.

Captain Bill Dickinson runs the Seattle Temple Corps of the Salvation Army, a congregation of more than 400 members. He is 53 years old, mild, plainspoken, compact, graying. His voice is usually diffident, but now and then it will rise into the cantatory inflections of testimony. Bill and his wife, Mary, were childhood sweethearts in Walla Walla, Washington, where they both occasionally attended Salvation Army services. They married in 1960, a year after Bill finished his Navy service. Bill eventually became a successful restaurant owner. He also became an alcoholic.

"I found early on that I'm the kind of person who can't take just one drink. I was always trying to find satisfaction in *something*. I thought, if I work hard enough and make enough money, that way we'll find happiness. And we were very successful, and I felt no satisfaction. We had the financial means to do all kinds of stuff, and

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yet it was just an *empty* life." In Spokane, Washington, the Dickinsons began attending Army services for the first time since childhood.

Bill Dickinson told me of his resistance to the whispering call. "I got to the point where I hated to go to church. The Holy Spirit had really been convicting me of my sin—my sins—and I had such a need to repent and come back to him. But I wouldn't yield to the Holy Spirit because of my pride." He smiled, a little sheepish at the memory. "So finally it's Sunday morning and I'm sitting in the pew at church, and I couldn't wait for them to give the altar call. I thought, 'This is it, now or never.' August 29, 1982, at about 12:15, I went forward and accepted Christ as my Savior in the Lord. And I was delivered from the taste of alcohol."

Like Dickinson, many Army officers have had wide experience in the secular world. Yet there is no typical Salvationist; prejudgment fails in this real world on which so many false stereotypes are based. Bill Dickinson is what he seems to be. Only in meeting a person whose internal life is so visible can we see how rare that quality is—the transparency that comes to each of us only when we are doing exactly what we want to do, and think we should be doing, with our lives.

On a Christmas visit I made to Dickinson's temple last year, he introduced me to another kind of Salvationist, a tall, broad, laughing 35-year-old man named Ken Solts. Solts was then a second-year seminary student sent from California to help with the holiday kettle drive. Over cocoa in the Temple kitchen, Solts interrupted our conversation to ask me if I had accepted Jesus as my personal savior, accepted my refusal to discuss the matter with another laugh and went on. He eagerly told me of his own history of drug dealing and jail time. "Everything kind of caught up all at once, when I was 29." He shook his head. "There's something about what that drug—crank—does to you, something that makes you such an airhead, and it takes a long time for it to wear off. God has changed my life in such a short time, and if He can do it for me, He can do it for anyone.

"I'd made a lot of promises to God, and now I was really in a bad place. So I made another promise—that if He got me out of prison time, I would change my life. And somehow the courts ended up combining all my felonies into one, which was a miracle in itself, and then the judge suspended my sentence. I had three years probation, and all kinds of fines to pay, and there I was, with a big promise to keep.

"My parents are auxiliary captains in Sacramento. I knew if I moved there I'd have to go to church," he continued. "So, I went, but I wasn't ready to give in. One day I was just sitting there and I really felt the need to change my life. I prayed and asked Christ into my heart.

"When I was saved, I said, 'O.K., this is cool, but I'm *not* wearing that uniform.' So five months later I'm wearing a uniform, being sworn in as a senior soldier. Then my dad started talking to me about officership, and I said, 'I don't want to be an officer.' Besides, it's real strict. You can't be a cadet if you're on probation. Then the captain wrote to the probation officer, and the Army made a special grant to pay off my fines. They sent them a check. And the judge let me off."

People who join the Salvation Army church sign a covenant called the "Articles of War," and are then called soldiers. (Many people who attend Army services prefer not to sign the Articles, often because of the smoking restriction. These people are called "adherents.") Soldiers are enjoined against the use of alcohol, tobacco and other recreational drugs, and told to avoid gambling, debt and the use of profanity. They are encouraged to join trade unions and generally will side with labor during strikes. Soldiers are also urged to examine themselves for dishonesty, racism, sexism and arrogance. The Salvationist is admonished to see himself as a "stranger" on earth, and to see the church itself as "a band of pilgrims who are called to separate themselves from the oppressive patterns of the present." The death of a Salvationist is routinely referred to as a "promotion to Glory," and mourning is discouraged.

The Salvation Army's mix of social action and religion leads to a number of policies unexpected in fundamentalist Christianity. The Army *is* quaint, and austere; Salvationists are also unflinchingly clear-headed about the state of the world. Naïveté, like the blush on the bonneted girl's cheek, is only an image. The Army combines radicalism and conservatism in a mix that should not work: since its inception it has been accused of being too conservative by some observers and too liberal by others—too religious in its charitable work, too secular in its religion.

Salvationists traditionally volunteer in war zones, and Army officers are qualified as military chaplains. But any Salvationist who declares himself to be a conscientious objector will receive the church's backing. Contraception among Salvationists is not only a private matter between husband and wife, but, to a church intimate with the problems of overpopulation and poverty, also a matter of "informed responsibility."

Two issues stand out as the traditional thorns of fundamentalism—abortion and homosexuality. Abortion is

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strongly discouraged, but there are certain exceptions in which it is an acceptable choice. Homosexuality is considered one of several examples of "sexual misconduct," but the Doctrines of the Army are careful to distinguish between homosexual behavior and homosexual "tendencies." This doctrine is, in fact, the only example of real naïveté I've come across in Army literature. ("Some homosexuals achieve a happy heterosexual marriage," reads the position paper.) Absent from the Army's attitude toward homosexuality, however, is any trace of hate-mongering. In the words of the church, homosexuality is not "blameworthy and should not be allowed to create guilt."

Salvation Army officers receive no salary; the commitment to the poor includes the experience of poverty. (William Booth, the Army's founder, told one class of newly trained officers, "I sentence you all to hard labor for the rest of your natural lives.") These days, Army officers are provided with modest housing, a car, a portion of the cost of their uniforms, 80 percent of their medical expenses and a living allowance. At the beginning of her career, a single officer will receive $138 per week; the amount gradually increases. A married couple receives between them a beginning allowance of $229 per week. A child under the age of 5 increases the couple's allowance by $23 per week. The most any officer or officer couple can make is $282 a week. (This is, approximately, all the compensation given to the Army's general, its worldwide leader.) Most officers tithe their allowance to the church. And the tithe is not all; from its inception, the Army has occasionally called on its members and officers for Self-Denial Funds for specific projects; in 1992 the Army raised more than $20 million from its own staff.

A Salvation Army officer is expected to be in uniform whenever he or she is on duty, and officers are almost always on duty. According to church literature, the navy blue uniform is "an invitation to the people to avail themselves" of officers for any kind of help. "I tell you, if I put my uniform on and go down the street and approach somebody," Dickinson told me one afternoon, "I'll have a very easy time striking up a conversation with them and even talking to them about the Lord. If I take my uniform off and just dress up in a suit or casual clothes, and do the same thing, chances are I'll be ignored. With the uniform they know they're safe. They're probably going to hear the Gospel story, but they'll accept that. They don't have to be afraid.

"People wave and smile at me. People will even stop and tell me, 'Thank you for how you helped me out fifteen or twenty years ago, forty or fifty years ago,' or, 'Thank you for how you helped my parents. They always told me that if I was ever in trouble, I could go to the Salvation Army and they would help me.' "

Army founder William Booth was born in Nottingham, England, in 1829 to severe poverty. He was a teetotaler, a vegetarian, the father of eight, often ill and depressed. He was called "General" wherever he went, and once was described as being "desperately in earnest all the time." He certainly looks earnest in his photographs, earnest and infinitely weary, with a long white beard, a frosting of snow-white hair, a prominent nose and uncommonly sad eyes.

Booth began preaching as a Wesleyan Methodist, but was kicked out of the church because of his volatile outdoor sermons and his insistence on universal salvation—that God's saving grace was available to all people. (In Booth's time, the poor were either not allowed into church services or were required to stay hidden behind screens.) His sermons drew big crowds, and eventually mobs, riots and the police, especially after his young wife, Catherine Mumford, began to preach beside him. They converted hundreds of people at a time. In 1878 he changed the name of his Christian Mission to the Salvation Army, adopting as his motto "Blood and Fire."

Booth wanted the poor of London, he said, to have only what cab horses could depend upon: adequate food, decent shelter, gainful employment. He believed economic conditions held people in thrall. In fact, reading his proposals today is a lesson in how very different roads can lead to the same goal, because William Booth steered close to a kind of Marxism in his love of Christ. The Army, instead, arrived at a policy of strict nonpartisanship. Only once, and not without internal dissension, has the Army taken a public political position; in 1928 it briefly endorsed Herbert Hoover for president because he supported prohibition.

George Bernard Shaw, in his introduction to *Major Barbara*, wrote that Booth "would take money from the Devil himself and be only too glad to get it out of his hands and into God's." The philosophy is akin to Booth's feeling about the joy of music, which in the Army's hands is both irrepressible and reverent. "I rather enjoy robbing the Devil of his choicest tunes," said Booth.

Once the Army was established, clients were expected to pay for their meals. If the bowl of soup cost a penny to make, a man should pay a penny, and if he didn't have a penny, the Army gave him a penny's worth of work to do before he ate. This policy continued well into the 1950s, but today, sheer numbers make it impossible to let every hungry person work for his or her meal. Instead, one officer told me simply, "If unemployment is the problem, we get them jobs." Eighty-two thousand jobs last year, in fact.

In the United States, the Salvation Army has seen its biggest successes. The Army's first overseas missionaries, seven women and a man, were sent to America in 1880. Only one of the women was over the age of 20. A few days after docking in New York (the first Salvation sermon being delivered on the dock), the missionaries preached at Harry Hill's Variety, a saloon on the corner of Crosby and Houston Streets. The *New York World* duly reported the event as "A PECULIAR PEOPLE AMID QUEER SURROUNDINGS." Within six months there were twelve American Salvation Army Corps; within ten years, the Army was in forty-three states. And it grew, adding new Corps almost monthly, and never failing to find new

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forms of spectacle and display for its message—"Soup, Soap and Salvation!" The first Salvation Army Christmas kettle was a crab pot put out on a street in San Francisco, appropriated on an impulse by an officer in 1891 and labeled "Keep the Pot Boiling!"

The first Army home for alcoholics, called the Church of the Homeless Outcast, was started in Detroit in 1939. Now there are 147, known as Adult Rehabilitation Centers (ARCs). The clients in such programs, who must be considered unemployable when they are admitted, receive free shelter, food, detoxification, counseling and "work therapy"—training, advice, experience and placement. Clients sort used clothes, pick up donations, help with maintenance. In return, they receive a stipend of up to $15 a week.

The $726 million raised from individual donors in the United States last year represents about two-thirds of the United States Salvation Army's income. The rest comes from foundations, income-producing programs (hospitals, day-care centers), corporations and federal and state governments. In recent years, the amount of federal money accepted by the Army has dropped to less than 1 percent of its annual budget. The Army considers it "unnatural" to separate its secular work—charity—from its religious purpose. When the government pushes on the church-state separation issue, the Army shoves back—it returns the money and refuses any more with such a hitch attached. The Army now requires its other donors to sign an agreement giving it the right to keep its iconography visible.

A few months after his altar call, Bill Dickinson felt the call to become an Army officer. "I'm sitting there saying, 'Lord, I'm 43, and I know I'm too old to go into the training school, and so there's no possible way to fulfill what you're telling me to do.' " There was another complication, too: officers may only be married to another officer, or lose their rank altogether. Married couples always work together, in parallel roles or sharing the duties of a single position. Bill could never become an officer without Mary at his side.

Shortly after that Bill learned about something called an auxiliary commission that would enable him and Mary to become officers without attending seminary. He approached Mary with the idea. "She said, 'Absolutely not. There's no way that I'll ever become a Salvation Army officer.' I knew it was either both of us or neither of us."

Mary Dickinson, a shy woman who admits she "lacks confidence," is an uncommon officer because she would have been happy not to have become an officer at all. "I was very comfortable being at home, being a housewife. We had a good business, and three beautiful children, and grandchildren. Then he came to me and told me he wanted to be an officer. And I said, 'I *can't.* There's just no way.' Well, you never tell God *never.* It wasn't long after that, about a year, that God did speak in my heart." She laughs. "I said, 'Lord, you *really* don't mean that!' I struggled for some time, and I still struggle a lot."

When I asked Mary about the role of women in the Army she eyed me for a long moment before speaking. She had already told me she preferred to be addressed as "Mrs. Captain Bill Dickinson," rather than by her own name. "I have the feeling the women here . . . ," she trailed off, laughing. "You're not going to like this and most people don't like it when I say it, so I don't say it very often. I think women aren't equal to men. I feel the last word should be the husband's; it's a man's place behind the pulpit. People here, they get really angry with me sometimes. Because the women here *like* to be leaders."

Women have always been allowed to hold any position and have always outnumbered men in the Army, both as soldiers and officers. For the past seven years (two years longer than the usual term) the general of the Salvation Army was a woman, an Australian named Eva Burrows. Until her retirement last July, she held the highest religious office of any woman in the world.

Catherine Mumford Booth openly advocated women's rights at a time of embryonic suffragism, and her influence on her husband was strong. William Booth wrote, "Women must be treated as equal with men in all intellectual and social relationships of life." Catherine Booth was openly condemned for preaching; in her day, women weren't allowed to hold religious office and were forbidden to take the pulpit. When a man at one of her open-air Bible meetings quoted Paul's advice to the Corinthians—"Let your women keep silence in the Churches"—she replied, "In the first place this is not a church, and in the second place I am not a Corinthian."

After physical and psychological testing and some education—a process lasting about a year—the Dickinsons were commissioned as auxiliary captains in November of 1985. They worked as assistants in Spokane, and then were transferred to a small congregation in Idaho, then to a larger one in Kelso, Washington. When they became full captains in 1990, they moved to Seattle.

The Salvation Army is divided into Corps, which are evangelical units serving specific regions. As head of the Seattle Temple Corps, Bill functions largely as the pastor of any good-sized Protestant congregation does: writing and delivering sermons, ministering to the sick, conducting weddings and funerals, teaching and counseling. Mary cooks the Temple's weekly lunch for the elderly, helps clean the buildings, runs the Home League—a women's group—makes hospital visits, counsels women, designs the Sunday worship service around Bill's choice of topics, handles scheduling and, in the Christmas season, helps manage the kettle drive.

The Dickinsons work sixty to eighty hours a week. In its early days the Salvation Army had to force its officers to take vacations ("furloughs") because otherwise the officers worked themselves to exhaustion. "It's so difficult to find the time," says Dickinson, who, like every other Salvation Army officer I've met, seems to be in an

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organized hurry much of the time. "That's kind of a lame excuse, I guess, but I think we're in the last days, myself. There's so many things that need to be done, and so little time to do it in."

On a winter day, in a cold, unceasing drizzle, Dickinson took me to Seattle's Harbor Light—the name typically given to the Army's shelters for the homeless. (A new social services building, the William Booth Center, has since replaced it.) Dickinson ran this program when he first came to Seattle, before being transferred to the Temple. We walked past the line of people waiting to enter, heads down in the rain, and were greeted all the way to the door. "Hey, Captain." "How are you, Captain?"

Inside, I watched a quiet crowd of 106 men and four women file into the dim chapel. Almost everyone was black or Hispanic. The so-called ethnic ministries of the Army, aimed at blacks, Asians and Hispanics, are its fastest-growing segments in the United States. Elsewhere in Seattle an entire Salvation Army Corps is devoted to the Laotian population. Many clients are from minority groups, many are immigrants, legal and otherwise, and many don't speak English.

I had heard clients in other programs refer to the church as the 'Starvation Army,' in spite of the fact that this meal, like all meals for the homeless, is free. I stood in the back talking to Major Eddie Reed, a retired officer who volunteered as chaplain. Officers have to retire at 65, and in fact the Army maintains retirement homes for them if desired, but almost all volunteer back into service.

Reed said that times had changed, that unlike the "hoboes" of a few decades back, many of the homeless men he meets today don't want to work for their meals. "Maybe they think the sermon is too high a price," he added. Earlier, a Harbor Light counselor had told me that her clients were getting younger, and frequently had multiple addictions. "We're seeing people who had everything—car, job, apartment—and lost everything."

"Take off your hats!" yelled Vern, the doorman, an ex-ARC client, and at his words several dozen baseball caps and cowboy hats disappeared. Reed then delivered a five-minute sermon, taking as his theme the universal nature of God's love, and offering an invitation to anyone wanting to accept the altar call. No one did. "Let us pray. God, we ask that you bless the men in this room. Bless the women in this room. We pray that you will touch their hearts and their lives. These things we ask in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen." The room filled with a low murmur of amens, and then Vern's loud, demanding voice: "Everybody, stay where you are! Sit down, please! Back row first!"

When Bill Dickinson was sent to the Temple Corps, Captain Sherry McWhorter was transferred from Alaska to replace him in the social services program, of which this Harbor Light is a part. A divorced mother of four adopted children with a master's degree, McWhorter had spent thirteen years running social welfare programs for the Army. She is a solid woman with steel-gray, brush-cut hair and a brusque manner ruined by her silky Texas accent; when I asked her about the need for social services in Seattle and Alaska, she didn't hesitate.

"There's a whole generation of people now in their 20s and 30s who are a wasted generation. I've felt very frustrated ever since the Reagan years, when they made so many cutbacks, especially in maternal and child health. People are so much worse off now. I'm not picketing or anything, but in every community the Salvation Army tries to help wherever we can to correct societal problems, and the helping process is often hindered by the government." The sight of Sherry McWhorter picketing in her navy blue uniform has tremendous appeal. The Army's policy of nonpartisanship is not always an equal match for the religiously inspired activism of its members.

When the health department ordered Dickinson to throw away donated food, he threatened to have T.V. cameras film the event. The department backed off. Dickinson also publicly embarrassed the city of Seattle into allowing the homeless to sleep in the foyers of public buildings during a vicious cold snap. Such occasions of, as Dickinson puts it, "throwing our weight around when we have to," are in Booth's tradition. After all, Booth wanted brass bands because brass gets attention.

After Reed's brief sermon, the crowd hurried through the basement lunch-line, taking bowls of soup, hunks of bread and apples back to long, bare tables. They ate hurriedly, coming back for seconds until the food was gone. Several men filled their pockets with apples and partial loaves of bread.

Last week I stood by a kettle in a big, crowded mall. (The kettle on the street corner has become the kettle in the mall, although many malls forbid the kettles altogether. Those that allow them often won't permit a bell.) A four-person band, three men in jaunty caps and pressed slacks and one woman in a knee-length navy skirt, adjusted their music stands, lifted their polished golden instruments and burst into the familiar strains of "Joy to the World."

A small crowd gathered. A tall man with a cap pulled down over his face strode by, dropping a handful of change into the kettle without looking up; two children sidled up and slipped in a bill; a cheerful young woman approached with both hands in front of her and emptied a pile of clanking coins. "See, I'm emptying my pockets!" she cheerfully called out. One traditional carol followed another, "Silent Night" giving way to "Here Comes Santa Claus" with extra, glittering trills. People stood nearby, smiling; the old man in a soldier's uniform, sitting by the kettle because he was too tired by then to stand, nodded in time to the trombone's beat.

And now it's me turning my pockets out. I don't have to agree with its theology to know that in Salvationism, unlike most religions, actions do speak louder than any number of words. If I want to help the poor and homeless with my money, this red kettle is a safe place to start. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Not So Merry England

From Britain, two uncomplimentary films about Britain. **In the Name of the Father** (Universal) is about the so-called Guildford Four (though more than four were involved), Irish people who were given long sentences for their alleged participation in the IRA bombing of a pub in Guildford, Surrey, in 1974. After fifteen years and much struggle, and after one of the convicted people had died, new evidence was brought forth to clear all the convicted. Even more bitterly, it was found that the new evidence was in fact old: it had been suppressed by the police at the first trial.

Gerry Conlon, youngest of the group, wrote a book about his experiences, which was adapted for the screen by Terry George and Jim Sheridan. Sheridan, who directed *My Left Foot,* also directed here; and Daniel Day-Lewis, who played the physically impaired artist in the earlier film, plays Conlon.

Sheridan and colleagues understood their chief problem: how to sustain interest in a story that was well-known in advance, not a large historical subject with its own prestige but a news story now dated. So they concentrated on character and on acid irony. Unlike the belatedly informed public, we know from the start that the accused people are innocent. Gerry Conlon's background seems almost designed to get him into this trouble. He was a drifter who had been in some minor scrapes with the police in his native Belfast for his part in anti-British demonstrations, and in London he fell into dingy company. On the other hand, his father, arrested and convicted on thin circumstantial evidence, had led a relatively blameless life but was caught in the tide of feeling against his son. Their sentencing led to the oddest of prison pairings—father and son occupying the same cell. (Other "conspirators" were held elsewhere.) It's the father who dies, of pulmonary troubles, before their sentences are quashed.

What is basically being dramatized here is the revulsion of Britain at IRA terrorism—the pub bombing is shown brutally—and the frenzy to feel that some progress is being made against it. The police cabal is comprehensible (*not* justifiable) both as response to public outcry and as almost personal retaliation. The authorities' tacit assumption is that if these weren't precisely the people who did the bombing, anyway they were Irish, anti-British and might conceivably do the next bombing. This obviously is neither law nor justice; so, as the saying goes, what else is new?

Sheridan directs like a good, firm storyteller. And he gets a fiery performance from Day-Lewis that contrasts strongly with that actor's near somnolence in *The Age of Innocence.* Of course Gerry Conlon is easier to play than Newland Archer. What is inside Conlon comes out; what is inside Archer stays there for the most part. Still, Martin Scorsese didn't much help Day-Lewis to suggest restrained feeling in the earlier film. Sheridan helps him open the furnace doors here.

The elder Conlon is done by Pete Postlethwaite, with a bony ruggedness that ensures our belief. Corin Redgrave, brother of Vanessa, is the police inspector in charge of the evidentiary cover-up, a righteous hostage to wrong motives.

Lastly, but oh, not leastly, the barrister who works furiously for the innocent prisoners' release is Emma Thompson. At first glimpse she is hardly recognizable, not because of her different hairdo but because she is now in the center of a differently centered life from last time. The screenplay never tells us who engaged her to fight the cause she is steeped in or whether it's pro bono, but we're so glad she is doing it that we don't care. The courtroom speech in which she presents the suppressed evidence is magnificent.

Godard's *Breathless* begins with car theft and murder; and in the last sequence the protagonist runs down the middle of a street. Mike Leigh's **Naked** (Fine Line) begins with rape—or at least sex turned very nasty—and a car theft; and it ends with the protagonist limping down the middle of a street. What happens in between is Leigh's own, but if Godard were Leigh's age and British, he might well have made this picture. The insouciance toward plot, the chance en-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

The Accompanist. *In wartime Paris a young woman becomes accompanist to a well-known soprano and also becomes accompanist to her tangled private life. Intelligent, mature. Delicately directed by Claude Miller. (Reviewed 12/13/93)* **A Dangerous Woman.** *The story is trite and somewhat trying, but see it for Debra Winger's sterling performance as a woman whose mind is slightly below par. (12/20/93)* **The Remains of the Day.** *Anthony Hopkins is the butler, Emma Thompson the housekeeper in a Stately Home. The novel is overexplicated, but those two performances make it very rewarding. (12/6/93)* **Schindler's List.** *Steven Spielberg's monumental rendition of a strange, wonderful story—the Nazi businessman who saved 1,100 Jews in occupied Poland. Excellent. (12/13/93)* **—SK**

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counters along the way that are explored in great detail and then sharply dropped—these, too, are reminders of Godard.

The first Leigh film I saw was *High Hopes*, also quasi-Godardian, which dealt with proud casualness among anti-Thatcher dropouts in London. Then came *Life Is Sweet*, revolving around a restaurant, which was a disappointment, confected. He's back in casual stride again with *Naked* as he tells the non-tale of Johnny, a bright and dedicatedly grungy young man who steals a car in Manchester, drives to London, looks up Louise, a friend from Manchester, sleeps with her roommate because Louise isn't there at the moment and moves in for a while.

He floats around London for one night, meeting a young Scottish couple whose Glasgow speech we can't understand, a philosophic night watchman, an older woman whose offer of sex he declines because she resembles his mother, a waitress who invites him home and then declines *him*. Something of a counterpoint to Johnny's narrative is that of Sebastian, a rich young sadist who owns the house that Louise is subletting and who shows up to collect sexually. The fact that sleek Sebastian is not much more sadistic than anomic Johnny suggests that the ruling genius here isn't Émile Durkheim but Andrea Dworkin.

The film leans heavily in favor of dropping out, which gives it a slightly sentimental, dated feeling. We're asked to share the '60s view that those who do nothing are of greater purity than those who may be trying to do something useful. Johnny is an inquirer who lives on the hope that he won't find answers, scrounging along in several ways, shrugging himself free of emotion and commitment. Which attitude, at this late date, is supposed to make him especially interesting.

David Thewlis's performance helps, however. Lesley Sharp, as the girl from Manchester, and Katrin Cartlidge, as her housemate, are taking. One of Leigh's anti-conventions is to use women who are not pretty. This ploy succeeds in a wry way: the more we know these women, the prettier they become.

Leigh works with his actors for months before shooting, asking them to improvise on scenes he has planned. Then the improvised dialogue is written down, organized, polished. It's a method that was used by Joseph Chaikin's Open Theater and other groups. In Leigh's film it leads to a certain springiness in the talk. •

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A grim Balkan entertainment.

The Parable of the Stripper

By Arthur Miller

The Yugoslav catastrophe raises, for me, an especially terrible and comical memory. In the 1960s I presided over the Congress of International PEN that was held in Bled, a beautiful resort town built around a crystal clear lake high in the lovely mountains of Slovenia. Bled had been the watering hole for generations of Europeans, a fairy-tale place. And it was already more than a decade since Tito had broken with Moscow.

Marxist intellectuals in Yugoslavia were remarkably open in their criticisms of the economy and politics of the country. That the system needed deep changes was taken for granted, and new concepts were being floated that would free individual initiative while retaining the social gains of the Communist system. Worker ownership of factories was being tried, and identical consumer products, such as radios, were given different names in order to spur competition between factories, in the hope of raising quality and lowering prices. Yugoslavia was prodding the limits of socialism; and to come there from the dictatorships of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, not to mention Russia, was to experience the shock of fresh air. In the '60s Yugoslavia the place seemed filled with enormous energy. These were the proudest, friendliest people I had met in Europe, and the most frank and open.

There was one taboo, unmentioned but obvious: the ethnic nationalism that Tito had ruthlessly suppressed. I knew, of course, that Slovenians, Bosnians, Serbs, Croatians, Montenegrans and other nationalities made up the Yugoslav delegation to the PEN Congress, but to me they all looked alike and conversed in a mutually understood language, so their differences might be no more flammable than those separating the Welsh and the English, or maybe even Texans and Minnesotans. And when I asked an individual, out of curiosity, if he was Croatian or Slovenian or whatever, and the question caused a slight uneasiness, it seemed minimal enough to be dismissed as more or less irrelevant in this rapidly modernizing country.

Then one evening a group of four writers, one of them a Serb journalist friend called Bogdan, invited me out for a drink after dinner. Two of my companions were poets, a Croatian and a Montenegran, and one a Slovenian professor. We walked down the road to the local nightclub that usually catered to tourists. The room was very large, like a ballroom. There were maybe fifty bare, plastic-covered tables, only a few of them occupied by stolid, square-headed Alpine types. The cold night air was not noticeably heated. The place had the feeling of a big Pittsburgh cafeteria between meals.

Then a three-piece band took places on a platform up front and began tootling American jazz standards, and a woman materialized and stood unsmilingly facing the audience. Small and compact, she wore a matching brown skirt and jacket and a shiny white rayon blouse. In a businesslike way, she began undressing, in what I was informed was to be a delightful striptease. The scattered audience of men and their chunky women silently gulped beer and sipped slivovitz as the dancer removed her suit jacket, her shoes, her blouse and her skirt, until she stood looking out upon us in her pink rayon slip and bra. It was all done rather antiseptically, as if preparing for a medical examination. Each garment was tidily laid out and patted down on the piano bench, there being no pianist.

Then she stepped out of her slip, and in her panties did a few routine steps in approximate time to the music. She had very good legs. Things were heating up. From somewhere she picked up a heavy blue terry cloth robe and, wrapped in it, she slipped off her bra and flashed one breast. My fellow writers broke off their dying conversation. I don't know what got into me, but I asked a fatal question; "Can you tell from looking at her what her nationality is?"

My Serb friend Bogdan, depressed by his wife's absence in Belgrade, since it had left him for the entire week to the mercies of his melancholy mistress, glanced across the room at the stripper, and gave his morose opinion: "I would say she could be Croatian."

"Impossible!" the Croatian poet laughed. And with a sharpened eye and a surprising undertone of moral indignation, he added, "She could never be Croatian. Maybe Russian, or Slovenian, but not Croatian."

"Slovenian!" The mocking shout came from the Slovenian literature professor, a tall, thin fellow with shoulder-length hair. "Never! She has absolutely nothing Slovenian about her. Look how dark she is! I would say from the South, maybe Montenegran."

The dark-skinned Montenegran poet sitting beside me simply exploded in a challenging "Ha!" Just a few minutes earlier, he had been ethnically relaxed enough to tell a joke on his own people. Montenegrans are apparently famous for their admirably lethargic natures. One of them, said the poet, was walking down a street when he suddenly whipped out his revolver and, swiveling about, shot a snail on the sidewalk behind him. His energetic Serbian friend asked what the hell he had done that for. The Montenegran explained, "He's been following me all day!"

When it came to the stripper, however, humor had noticeably evaporated, as each of the men kept handing her over to somebody else. And in the middle of this warming discussion of ethnic types, I noticed that the dancer had left the platform in her thick terrycloth robe, with her clothes cradled neatly in her arms. She was just about to pass us when I stuck out my arm and stopped her. "May I ask where you come from?" With a wan, polite smile, she replied "Düsseldorf," and continued on her way.

None of the writers allowed himself to laugh, though I thought one or two blushed at the irony of the situation. A bit tense, struggling awkwardly to reconstruct the earlier atmosphere of comradely warmth, we strolled through the dark Balkan night, the president and four distinguished delegates of the writer's organization established after World War I by H.G. Wells, George Bernard Shaw, Henri Barbusse and other war-weary writers as an attempt to apply the universalist tradition of literature to the melting down of those geographical and psychological barriers of nationalism for whose perpetuation humanity has always spent its noblest courage, and its most ferocious savagery.

Arthur Miller's new play *Broken Glass* will open in New York this spring. This was written for "An Evening for Sarajevo," organized by PEN American Center in New York on November 30.

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The strange migration of an elusive poet.

Rilke in America

BY CHRISTOPHER BENFEY

Rainer Maria Rilke, who wandered everywhere in Europe during his rootless life, and ventured as far as Russia and North Africa, never visited America or wanted to visit it. Like many cultivated Europeans, he assumed that the United States was a futuristic nightmare of rampant technology and soullessness. "Over there," he claimed in a letter of 1925, even a house, an apple, a grapevine have "*nothing* in common with the house, the fruit, the grape into which went the hopes and reflections of our forefathers." Modern Christianity, that "fruit sucked dry," was particularly barren in America, where "American Christians ... keep brewing with the same shreds of tea that have steeped now for two millennia." Rilke preferred (though he did not practice) Islam, which allowed one to talk to God each morning "without the telephone of Christ." He enjoyed luxury motor cars, ideally chauffeured by beautiful women friends, but he thought of the United States as a place of "gilded noise," like the "Pain City" of the *Duino Elegies*: "Especially / worth seeing (for adults only): the breeding of Money! / Anatomy made amusing! Money's organs on view! / Nothing concealed!"

All the stranger, then, that Rilke should now seem so securely at home in America. For surely no poet in a foreign language—not Garcia Lorca, not Mandelstam—is as popular here as Rilke. Ask young poets just starting out, who have never heard of Wyatt or Pope, for the name of their favorite poet, and they will say, unhesitatingly, "Rilke." Such popularity is the more puzzling when one considers all the hurdles, beyond the German language, that Rilke places between his work and the American reader. Never mind his admiration, late in his life, for Mussolini. Rilke is hardly an easy poet, in language or in theme, demanding that readers familiarize themselves, in his later poetry, with an arcane and wholly personal mythology of non-Christian angels and Orphic mysteries. The flavor of Rilke's letters, with their descriptions of ancestral houses and their hyphenated correspondents from European nobility (especially his patroness, Princess Marie von Thurn und Taxis-Hohenlohe), is frankly undemocratic and often reactionary. And his "family values" are quite suspect. He lived apart from his wife, supposedly in the interest of his art and a theory of higher love ("We need, in love, to practice only this: / letting each other go..."), and showed no interest in his daughter or his grandchild. "Rilke was a *jerk*," John Berryman testily concluded in his *Dream Songs*.

CHRISTOPHER BENFEY, who teaches at Mount Holyoke College, is the author of *The Double Life of Stephen Crane* (Knopf).

The Best of Rilke
translated by Walter Arndt
(University Press of New England, 187 pp., $12.95 paper)

Selected Poems of Rainer Maria Rilke
translated by Robert Bly
(HarperCollins, 235 pp., $13 paper)

The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke
translated by Stephen Mitchell
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The Lay of the Love and Death of Cornet Christopher Rilke
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The Book of Images
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(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 197 pp., $10 paper)

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translated by Edward Snow
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The Unknown Rilke
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(Oberlin College Press: FIELD Translation Series, 176 pp., $12.95 paper)

The Duino Elegies
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But where does Rilke really belong? He is not securely at home in any national literature, least of all that of the despised Germany, to which he claimed to be "attached only by language." The Czech Republic can hardly claim him, though he was born in Prague in 1875, and died in 1926 holding a Czech passport. The Austro-Hungarian Empire, his native realm, was dismantled after World War I, and Rilke never set foot in the newly minted country of Czechoslovakia. Switzerland, where he spent the last years of his life as the rural "hermit of Muzot," he considered hardly a country at all, but "a conspiracy of hotels." The closest thing to a home for him was probably Paris, where he achieved his first artistic breakthrough circa 1905, when he was working as Rodin's secretary, writing his novel *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, and composing the taut, self-effacing poetry that went into his two volumes of *New Poems*. Late in his life, after the triumphant completion in 1922 of the *Duino Elegies* and the *Sonnets to Orpheus*, he served as a sort of cultural intermediary between the French and German languages and literatures, translating Valéry and writing minor poems in French.

Rilke's poetry owes as much to French models as to German ones. The *New Poems* draw sustenance from Baudelaire's urban vision and from the "impersonal" workmanship that Rilke discerned in Rodin and Cézanne. The *Duino Elegies* and much of Rilke's cryptic output after World War I are clearly alive to Hölderlin's late hymns, with their shared yearning for a lost radiance; but other German poets meant little to Rilke. Goethe, for example, was hardly a presence for him. Spiritual inspiration came from elsewhere: from Tolstoy's Russia, where Rilke traveled with his first great love, the feminist and psychoanalytic thinker Lou Andreas-Salomé, and then from Scandinavia, which provided a sort of alter ego in the imagined figure of Malte, a young Danish poet of aristocratic lineage, living confused and poor in Paris, like his creator.

Rilke's temperament is as elusive as his nationality. His parents—the feckless ex-army officer and railroad official; the

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devout and cultured mother who thought she had married down—could hardly have devised a more chaotic childhood for their only child. He was given the androgynous name of René Maria Rilke, and took the German form "Rainer" only at age 22, under Lou's influence. His mother, who had hoped for a girl, raised René as a daughter until the age of 7. He later complained that she only loved him "when there was a chance to present me in a new little dress to a few admiring friends."

Then, as though to give the father equal time, he was sent to a military academy at the age of 10, an utterly traumatic experience of which he repeatedly tried to make sense in his writing, most memorably in the story "The Gymnastics Class," where a boy called Gruber, normally the last in the class and a figure of fun and humiliation, frantically climbs up the pole and strains himself, collapsing afterward of a heart attack. A classmate catches a glimpse of the corpse laid out in a closet: "He's all naked and sunken and very tall. And there is a stamp on the soles of his feet..."

Militarism and femininity are intertwined, helix-like, in a lot of Rilke's work, as though he was trying to reconcile his own parents, who drifted apart after his birth and soon took separate residences. One of the many subtle skewings in the American reception of Rilke is that the militaristic side of his work has been downplayed. I don't mean the *Five Cantos* with which he greeted the outbreak of World War I ("Yes, the fiery god, with one single move, tears / ripeness from the rooted people, and the harvest commences ... A god, finally" [Richard Exner]). Rilke recognized his error soon enough: "For only the first three or four days in August 1914 did I think I was seeing the awakening of some monstrous god; in no time at all it was merely the monster." I refer, rather, to the interesting fact that in the rash of new American translations since the lifting of W. W. Norton's copyright circa 1975, Rilke's most popular book in Germany, *The Lay of the Love and Death of Cornet Christopher Rilke*, has been all but ignored.

An early work whose first version was drafted in 1899, the *Cornet* was thoroughly revised in 1906, at the same time that Rilke was writing such classic poems as "The Panther" and "The Swan." It is a sort of German *Red Badge of Courage*, which it resembles in several important ways. Both books describe, in a vivid prose-poetry of precise details amid nightmarish surroundings, a young soldier's baptism by fire, his first wound, his first corpse ("They ride over a slain peasant. His eyes are wide open and something is mirrored in them; no heaven. Later hounds howl. So a village is coming, at last" [M. D. Herter Norton]). Both heroes are flag-bearers, for whom war is a theater for masculine heroism and humiliation. Both books were runaway best-sellers, and defining works for their generations' experience of war. (According to Wolfgang Leppmann, Rilke's biographer, someone suggested during the war that Rilke revise the *Cornet* to make the hero a flying ace.)

When Rilke himself was drafted for the war effort during a sojourn in Munich, at the age of 40, he was a disaster as a private, and soon, through the influence of friends, he was reassigned to a desk job at the War Archives. It was a humiliating experience. "Somewhere," he remarked, "there is a strain of old soldier's blood in me that makes me ashamed to create such a fuss." As though to remind himself of his heritage, he carried with him everywhere a photograph of his father as a young man in full military regalia, along with a (probably bogus) family coat of arms. In his will he asked that the same heraldic emblem—sable and silver shield, with two greyhounds rampant—be inscribed on his gravestone.

Rilke's work is hardly a presence in American poetry until after World War II, by which time his reputation had long been well-established in Europe. The reasons for this lag are not entirely clear. Adequate English translations, by the Englishman J. B. Leishman and the American M. D. Herter Norton, had begun to appear during the 1930s. But the poets of the modernist generation—Stevens, Pound, Williams, Eliot and the rest—proved remarkably incurious about Rilke. His instinctive conservatism and his occasional effeteness would hardly have put off Eliot and Stevens respectively, had they taken the time to read him. But the modernist lineage, as traced by Pound and Eliot, was French, especially nineteenth-century French, and beyond that resolutely Latinate. Modern German culture—painting and film as well as poetry—was simply off the Anglo-American cultural map until after 1945.

Not surprisingly, Germany was very much on the minds of the next generation of American poets. As the former Air Force instructor Randall Jarrell put it, "In bombers named for girls, we burned / The cities we had learned about in school." (A complementary conquest of Axis culture occurred on the West Coast, as poets like Kenneth Rexroth and Gary Snyder ransacked Japanese art and religion.) It was Jarrell's generation, the poets of the cold war, who first "received" Rilke, at times rockily. Berryman's *Dream Songs* are laced with snide asides about Rilke ("The soldiers, Coleridge Rilke Poe, / shout commands I never heard. / They march about, dying & absurd..."), an indication, if a negative one, of Rilke's prominence during the 1950s.

Jarrell and Robert Lowell were far more enthusiastic, finding in Rilke a resource for going beyond the modernist inheritance. The poets of this "middle generation" of American poets were looking for ways to restore a personal voice to poetry, and make use of their own autobiographical material. The two sides of Rilke's temperament, the martial and the effeminate, found echoes in the "confessional" experiments of Lowell and Jarrell. Like Rilke, Lowell was the son of an ex-military man who had done badly in business, and the scion as well of an aristocratic line. A conscientious objector during World War II, Lowell had tried to make sense of his paternal inheritance in the poems of *Life Studies*. He caught some of Rilke's soldierly tone, and ambivalence, in his loose translation, or "imitation," of Rilke's poem of 1906 about the photograph of his father. The hands bulge "like gloves upon the saber's basket hilt," while

> all the rest lies curtained in itself,
> and so withdrawn, I cannot understand
> my father as he bleaches on this page—
>
> Oh quickly disappearing photograph
> in my more slowly disappearing hand!

Lowell's fine play on a curtain being "withdrawn" is nowhere in the German, which is more like something "self-shrouded and erased" (Edward Snow). The "bleaching" of the father is literal, the action of the sun on the daguerreotype, and figural: he is bleached, bloodless, dim.

Jarrell, on the other hand, was drawn to what Rilke himself thought of as his "feminine" side. In his "Self-Portrait From the Year 1906," a pendant to the portrait of his father, Rilke found in his own gaze "still the childhood fear and blue / and humility here and there, not slavish / but a server's and a woman's" (Snow). No one has better caught the "childhood fear," the empathy for women, the sad loneliness of Rilke's voice than Jarrell, in his handful of translations from the late '50s. Probably no American poet so fully identified himself with Rilke either. When Hannah Arendt, who had been helping him with his versions of Rilke, remarked that Jarrell looked a bit like the very odd-looking Rilke, with his high forehead and weak

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chin, Jarrell was thrilled.

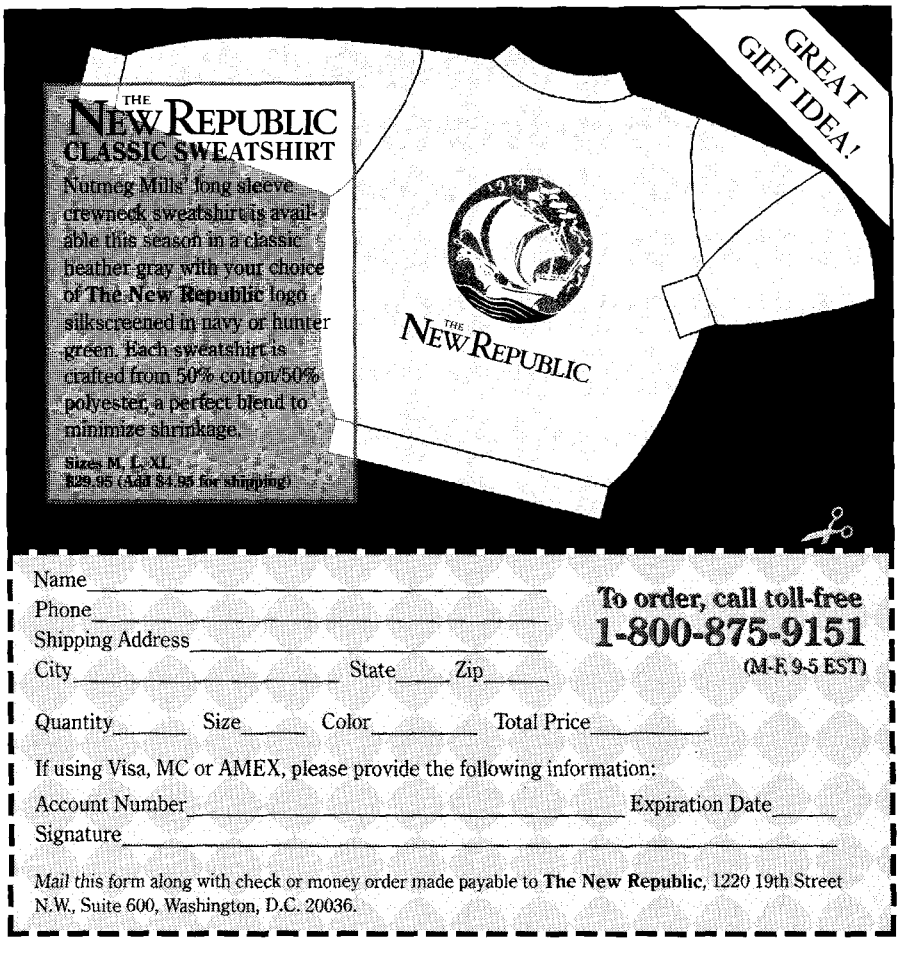
Jarrell's beautiful and unforced versions, especially of Rilke's early poems of loss and yearning, are not readily distinguishable from his own poems that accompanied them in *The Woman at the Washington Zoo*. One can go from Jarrell's translation of Rilke's famous "Lament" ("All is far / And long gone by. / I believe the star / That shines up there / Has been dead for a thousand years ... I would like to walk / Out of my heart, under the great sky. / I would like to pray...") to a poem by Jarrell called "The Meteorite" ("Star, that looked so long among the stones / And picked from them, half iron and half dirt, / One; and bent and put it to her lips / And breathed upon it till at last it burned...") without realizing that one has changed poets. And Rilke served another purpose for Jarrell, who during his "Rilke period" was trying in a series of famous poems ("Next Day," "The Woman at the Washington Zoo," "Player Piano") to speak as a woman, usually one worried about her advancing age. In translating poems like Rilke's "The Grown-Up" ("All this stood on her and was the world, / And stood on her with all things, Pain and Grace..."), Jarrell could imagine himself in a woman's developing body, and concurrently explore aspects of his own psyche—say, his anxiety about his own aging face—that he considered effeminate.

The 1960s marked another shift in American attitudes toward Rilke's work. If Jarrell and Lowell used Rilke to help "personalize" their own poetic language in the treatment of family history and gender reversal, certain influential poets of the '60s found in Rilke ways to go beyond or beneath the merely personal. In an extremely influential essay in 1963 titled "A Wrong Turning in American Poetry," Robert Bly offered Rilke's poetry as an "inward" alternative to "the outward direction of the Williams-Pound-Olson movement" (a movement, by the way, in which Bly included Jarrell and Lowell). Bly thought all these poets had aimed for a poetry of impersonal description, reproducing the outer world of the present or the past. Rilke, by contrast, was a poet of the collective unconscious, of the "liberation of the poetic image." The neo-surrealist writings of Bly, his friend James Wright and Galway Kinnell—a poetry of angels and bones consorting beneath the moon—owe something to this version of Rilke. (When Bly himself published a selection of Rilke translations twenty years later, he limited himself to the poems of Rilke's that most satisfied his theory, including a large batch from Rilke's early *Stundenbuch*, or Book of Hours, with "deep-image" passages like the following: "It's possible I am pushing through solid rock / in flintlike layers, as the ore lies, alone...")

It is difficult to follow Rilke with much confidence along the disparate strands of American poetry since the '70s: feminist, formalist, deconstructive (or "Language"), macho-populist. There is a kind of thoughtful, sensitive male poetry, exemplified by Robert Hass, Robert Pinsky and Edward Hirsch, in which I sometimes think I hear Rilke; and Mark Strand's recent work explicitly interweaves Wallace Stevens's autumnal voice with Rilke's elegiac mode. What has undeniably occurred, reflecting the historicizing temper of our time, is an effort of translation by various hands—many of them non-poets—to begin to find out what kind of poet Rilke really was.

For forty years, until the lifting of the copyright in the mid-1970s, readers without German had to rely mainly on the translations of J. B. Leishman and M. D. Herter Norton. Leishman was an Oxford don who specialized in English metaphysical poetry, and he often managed to make even fairly straightforward passages in Rilke sound like the knottiest lines of Donne. He was particularly inventive with adverbs, placing in different poems an "armada, oaringly outpressing" and a fountain "unhomesickly outspreading." Leishman's best versions are his *Duino Elegies*, where his collaborator, the poet Stephen Spender, curbed his linguistic excesses. First published in 1939 and now out of print, they remain, to my ear, the most satisfying versions in English of these grand poems. (A crucial line in the first elegy, "*Denn Bleiben ist nirgends*," becomes, in the most popular, later version by Stephen Mitchell, "For there is no place where we can remain," which is more an interpretation than a translation. Leishman and Spender, here and elsewhere, preserve the abruptness and the ambiguity of the original: "For staying is nowhere.")

Leishman's forbidding translations would have scared off as many readers as they attracted. Fortunately, American readers had an alternative in the versions of Herter Norton, which began appearing during the 1930s. This variously cultured woman, co-founder with her husband of the Norton publishing firm, and the author of a work on string quartet playing (she was a gifted violinist), is largely responsible for making Rilke available in America. Her modest versions aim for linguistic accuracy while sacrificing rhyme and (when she sees no way to preserve it without padding or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subtraction) meter.

Herter Norton's word choices are audible in many of the translations that were rushed into print around 1980, after the copyright was lifted. The much-praised Stephen Mitchell, probably the best-selling recent translator of Rilke, departs from Herter Norton at his peril. Here are some lines from her version of the first Orpheus sonnet, when the animals respond to the god's singing:

... Yet even in the silence
new beginning, beckoning, change went on.

Creatures of stillness
thronged out of the clear
released wood from lair and nesting-place;
and it turned out that not from cunning and not
from fear were they so hushed within themselves,

but from harkening.
Bellow and cry and roar...

And here is Mitchell:

... Yet even in that silence
a new beginning, beckoning, change appeared.

Creatures of stillness crowded from the bright
unbound forest, out of their lairs and nests:
and it was not from any dullness, not
from fear, that they were so quiet in themselves,

but from just listening.
Bellow, roar, shriek...

Little has changed after forty years. "Bright unbound forest" sounds better than "clear released wood," though the latter is closer to Rilke's stark "*aus dem klaren gelösten Wald.*" And where there is a real difference, as Mitchell's "not from any dullness" for Herter Norton's "not from cunning," Mitchell, who apparently wants to hear "listlessness" in the German *List*, is wrong.

Mitchell is as much a popularizer as a translator. The "liberties" that he takes are often traceable to previous versions. Consider a few more lines from "Lament": "*Ich glaube, im Boot, / das voröberfuhr, / hörte ich etwas Banges sagen.*" Edward Snow gives a fairly literal translation: "I think that in the boat / which slipped past / I heard something fearful being said." Mitchell does this with the passage: "I think there were tears / in the car I heard pass / and something terrible was said." Why "car" rather than the obviously correct "boat"? Because Jarrell, in his own translation, had changed the mode of transport, presumably to update the poem a bit. As for those bathetic tears, they seem to be Mitchell's own contribution.

Rilke seems perennially in danger of being repackaged as a sort of *gemütlich* Kahlil Gibran, dishing out insights about the difficulties of love (those teardrops on the dashboard), the wisdom of animals and children, and so on. Mitchell cannot be held single-handedly responsible for the soft-focus, New Age Rilke so palpable in America in recent years (where Woody Allen can call a character "Rain" because her mother loved Rainer's poetry), but his soft-edged translations have surely helped. His versions of the sonnets and elegies have recently appeared in a series of miniature Shambhala editions, along with the writings of various Chinese sages, as aids to meditation. Mitchell begins his introduction to the sonnets like this: "The great poets disappear into their works. In this they resemble the great sages, who wake up one day to the fact that they are completely transparent."

DRAWING BY DAVID SCHORR FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

After Rilke entered the public domain, the first flurry of translations, including Mitchell's, concentrated on the late Rilke of the elegies and the sonnets, as though the case for Rilke's greatness could best be made with these grand utterances, a sort of German *Four Quartets*. There were predictable efforts to "update" Rilke. David Young broke the long lines of the elegies into the triadic "variable feet" of William Carlos Williams's late verse, with the dubious result that Rilke looked and sounded like Williams. Thus, the famous opening of the first elegy became: "If I cried out / who would hear me up there / among the angelic orders? // And suppose one suddenly / took me to heart / I would shrivel..."

A. Poulin, whose versions of the elegies that appeared in 1977 were much admired by Robert Lowell, made more subtle changes. Lowell thought Poulin gave Rilke "the crisp speed of English," but this "speed" seems to come largely from the liberal use of contractions: "And if I cried, who'd listen to me in those angelic / orders? Even if one of them suddenly held me / to his heart, I'd vanish in his overwhelming / presence. Because beauty's nothing / but the start of terror we can hardly bear... Every angel's terrifying." It's not as though German is without contractions, but Rilke uses only one in this passage ("*es nähme / einer plötzlich ans Herz*").

More recent translators—Walter Arndt, Franz Wright and Edward Snow—have left the overexposed sonnets and elegies to one side, and concentrated instead on what Wright calls "the unknown Rilke." All three place particular emphasis on the *New Poems*, perhaps reflecting a growing consensus (it is one that I share) that these poems may represent Rilke's greatest achievement. Arndt belongs to that hoary school of translation that believes in preserving meter, rhyme and strictly accurate linguistic

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meaning. One can learn a lot from Arndt's excellent commentary, and from his blistering comparisons—competitions, really—among earlier versions of a given poem. Then he presents the winner, which is invariably his own. Sometimes he really does seem the winner, as in the opening of his muscular "Archaic Torso of Apollo," hardly an unknown poem, to be sure:

> We have no inkling of the fabled head
> Wherein the eyeballs ripened. Even so
> His trunk still sends a candelabrum glow
> By which his gaze, with just its wick set low,
>
> Persists and gleams.

The rest of the version isn't up to this. The ending reads, "for there is not the least / Of parts but sees you. You must change your life." And one wonders why Arndt, who rails at the slightest deviations of others, puts the first line in the present tense ("*Wir kannten nicht...*").

The problem with really faithful translations like Arndt's is that they have got to be perfect, and who can pull this off but a brilliant poet? Arndt's versions too often have a phrase or a word that sets one's teeth on edge, spoiling the effect of the poem. Still, his is a noble effort, and with the rebirth of interest in traditional verse forms in current American poetry, it may well spark new Rilke versions in the same vein.

Franz Wright and Edward Snow are no less painstaking in their efforts to preserve Rilke's meaning, but they allow themselves greater liberties in the treatment of meter and rhyme. Wright reminds me of Jarrell in his surefootedness and his delicacy of phrasing. His versions are in the key of recent American poetry and make particularly artful use of Rilke's enjambments. Wright's selections, moreover, are fascinating: for example, the Cavafyesque "The King" from the *New Poems*, which describes "the old men of the council" as they await the judgment of their 16-year-old king:

> The unsigned death sentence
> lies in front of him for a long time.
> And they think: how he tortures himself.
>
> If they knew him better, they'd realize
> he's simply counting to seventy, slowly,
> before he signs.

Snow translates these last lines more literally: "They'd know, if they knew him well enough, / that he just slowly counts to seventy / before he initials it." Okay, but the two uses of "to know" are different verbs in German (*wissen* and *kennen*), and the awkward penultimate line sacrifices speed and wit. One feels in Snow's versions a great intelligence at work, but not always a great ear. He tends to preserve Rilke's word order, syntax and line-breaks. The result is helpful to readers who have some German and are glancing across the page, and it is a welcome antidote to the Rilke-made-easy tendencies of other translators. Still, it may put some readers off.

Consider Snow's version of "The Panther," the earliest written and probably the best-known of all the *New Poems*:

> His gaze has from the passing of the bars
> become so tired, that it holds nothing
> more.
> It seems to him there are a thousand bars
> and behind a thousand bars no world.
>
> The supple pace of powerful soft strides,
> turning in the very smallest circle,
> is like a dance of strength around a center
> in which a great will stands numbed.
>
> Only sometimes the curtain of the pupils
> soundlessly slides up—. Then an image
> enters,
> goes through the limbs' taut stillness—and
> in the heart ceases to exist.

The poem is often praised for its extraordinary empathy: we are in the animal's mind. A sense of suffocating constraint is conveyed through the imagery of bars, endless circling and the vision dying in the heart. Rilke puts as much stress as possible on those thrice-repeated bars (*Stäbe*). He refuses to substitute a pronoun ("there are a thousand bars / and behind a thousand bars no world"), and in the third line he uses a jarring internal rhyme ("*Ihm ist, als ob es tausend Stäbe gäbe*") to hammer his meaning home. An animal rights poem? An exercise in representing radical "otherness"? Perhaps. But I suspect that, like many others among the *New Poems*, "The Panther" is a self-portrait as well. Those eye-exhausting bars are also lines of poetry, behind which the poet is caught in a sort of "prisonhouse of language," cut off from the "world."

Snow has characteristically preserved some of the word order, as in the first two lines. This allows him to end two lines with the word "bars": not quite what Rilke does, but close. He has also mostly preserved the pentameter of the original, with a very successful hammering in the fourth line, where I hear a stress on each of the last three words. Best of all, the translation is patient, accurate, subservient to the original. Snow wants us to hear Rilke through him, not to stun us with the glories and the flourishes of his own language.

Yet Snow's achievement goes beyond particular poems. His translations of the entirety of the *New Poems* must be counted as an event in American poetry, as much because of the quality of the translations as because of the availability henceforth of these poems in their original collections. And the same can be said of his more recent translation of the even more heterogeneous *Book of Images* (1906), which combines many of Rilke's most accessible early poems with such daring, stream of consciousness experiments as "About Fountains" and "Fragments From Lost Days." Snow's work reveals how carefully crafted Rilke's important early books were, with groups of poems pursuing similar themes and metaphors. "The Panther," for example, immediately follows a two-part poem called "The Prisoner," and precedes a couple of other animal poems.

One can also see how various these books are. The *Neue Gedichte* are often described as being poems about things (*Dinggedichte*), as though William Carlos Williams's dictum about modern poetry, "No ideas but in things," had been fulfilled in Rilke's work. It is true that many of the poems, and the most familiar ones in America, are about "things," statues, swans, fountains, museum bric-a-brac, all treated more or less "impersonally," as Rodin had taught the poet to do. Still, the *New Poems* have lots of other topics as well: Old Testament tales retold, historical vignettes, bits of Greek myth (including the famous "Orpheus. Eurydice. Hermes") in fin-de-siècle Greek revival style.

Snow is surely right to stress, in his excellent introductions, that the "thingness" of these poems has less to do with subjects than with an attempt to treat language as material, molding as a sculptor might the marble of syntax, line-breaks and the sounds of words and sentences. "In this poetry," Rilke said of Baudelaire in his book on Rodin, "there were passages standing out from the rest, not written but, as it seemed, molded ... lines which felt like reliefs to the touch and sonnets bearing the weight of a troubled thought like columns."

It is Rilke the verbal craftsman who I think is most likely to be today's Rilke in America, at least among poets. I don't mean the "writers' workshop" notions of craft, which tend to treat poems as hobby projects to tinker with, like bookends or flowerboxes. The "object poems" that one meets in every writing class and every little magazine may owe something to Rilke, though they tend to take objects as openings for personal "confession" and memory (my grandfather's shotgun, my mother's quilt). But a poem as a wrought thing, less expressive of self than of the materials of language and objects: now that seems something worth aspiring to, and something about which the so-called "Language poets," who reject the subjective lyric, might agree with the neo-formalists.

The best tribute to Rilke in contemporary American poetry is James Merrill's

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sublime "Lost in Translation" in which, among many things lost or misplaced, is Rilke's translation of Valéry's "Palme." It is Rilke's willingness to forgo felicity that draws Merrill, how he resists much of the "sun-ripe original" in order "to render its underlying sense." Some such spartan or monastic renunciation is required of the translator; he must be willing, as Merrill says, to walk on the "rhyme-rutted pavement" of the original's stanzas. If some of the heat of the original fades and cools, something wonderful sometimes emerges in its place,

> the fluted nouns
> Made taller, lonelier than life
> By leaf-carved capitals in the afterglow.
> The owlet umlaut peeps and hoots
> Above the open vowel. And after rain
> A deep reverberation fills with stars.

Those of us who believe in translation ("all is translation," Merrill concludes, "And every bit of us is lost in it"), concede that much is lost in those transactions—bargaining in a foreign language is always risky—but also believe that something is often found there, too. Rilke's German resists, of course, but we tramp through the forest of words anyway, hoping to hear the owlet umlaut hooting in our own language. •

Seduction and Betrayal

BY ANN HULBERT

The Robber Bride by Margaret Atwood

(Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, 466 pp., $23.50)

Margaret Atwood has now completed what could be called her misogyny trilogy, which began with *The Handmaid's Tale* seven years ago. Given her reputation as the Medusa of the North, you might well expect the politically correct villain: men cast in stone, heartless toward women, condemned for their bruising ways. But Atwood, as she has intimated from the start of her career and has insisted in her latest trio, which includes *Cat's Eye* (1989) and now *The Robber Bride*, is comparatively uninterested in run-of-the-mill male insensitivity, animosity and brutality toward the opposite sex. The tormentors of women who enthrall her are women.

Though female misogyny has never been a very fashionable subject, it has always been a very titillating one. The most immediate allure is, of course, sexual. There is a voyeuristic thrill in women's cruel competition with each other, especially over their status in men's eyes and beds, and Atwood's edgy, indiscreet fictional style has often buzzed with it. But she has also showed interest in a more refined, moral frisson: "betrayal by a woman friend is the ultimate betrayal," Atwood has remarked, unlike between lovers, for whom it "is almost expected." Disloyalty is the great preoccupation of her endlessly introspective characters of both sexes, but women's treachery to each other has beckoned as a source of unusual surprise, suspense, even seriousness.

There is also a political charge in the subject, which has not been lost on a writer with an uncanny instinct for the zig-zags of the zeitgeist. Trends in gender politics don't dictate Atwood's plots but they do pervade them, and tensions among women turn out to be a good testing ground of the fortunes of feminism. Although the "bad" woman's perfidy to her own kind has traditionally been ascribed to feminine weakness and insecurity about men, Atwood has long been tempted by an alternative, more heretical view, one that suddenly has cachet in the '90s: maybe the unsisterly woman is simply ambitious, avid for power and pleasure and ready to plow down more supine females—and males—in her path. A creature with that kind of defiant drive shakes up an important feminist stereotype: women as collective victims.

Atwood deserves credit for giving the stereotype a hard time from the start of her career. For more than two decades she has been busy analyzing, exposing, dramatizing, denouncing, satirizing the crippling pretensions of the victim image. The titillation quotient of her crusade has not always been as high as she has pushed it lately. In fact, she first confronted the mentality in the least sexy of contexts: she made her critical debut with a blunt diagnosis of a "great Canadian victim complex," which she discussed at length in *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (1971).

Though it didn't make waves beyond her native country, her approach was an augury of her splashier views on the female version of the complex, to which she promptly turned her attention. Never mind invoking "positive role models," Atwood urged, start by looking starkly at the beleaguered objects of pity. Naturally she was accused of blaming the victim, but she insisted that cold-eyed scrutiny was the only way to embolden the victim. "To fight the Monster," Atwood wrote in a response to one critic of *Survival*, "you have to know that there is a Monster, and what it is like (both in its external and internalized manifestations)."

In Atwood's worldly novels, acknowledging women's external monster is all in a day's work: men's political sins, moral lapses, emotional inadequacy and sexual unreliability are familiar enough, in literature as in life. For the writer who dreamed up an unforgettably repulsive image of internal female seething in her story "Hairball"—an ovarian cyst packed with tangled hair, bone fragments, toenails, fingernails and teeth—the monster within has clearly been the real inspiration. Atwood has been relentless about the need to challenge the victim's comforting, self-protective but ultimately self-destructive illusion of innocence: yes, she might be oppressed, but that doesn't make her unblemished or helpless. "I will enter a simple plea," Atwood wrote in "The Curse of Eve" (1978), an essay about literary images of her sex:

> Women, both as characters and as people, must be allowed their imperfections. If I create a female character, I would like to be able to show her having the emotions all human beings have—hate, envy, spite, lust, anger and fear, as well as love, compassion, tolerance and joy—without having her pronounced a monster, a slur or a bad example. I would also like her to be cunning, intelligent and sly, if necessary for the plot, without having her branded as a bitch goddess or a glaring instance of the deviousness of women.

Atwood's misogyny trilogy, like all of her fiction, was inspired by these wishes, but with one important modification: these novels suggest that, contrary to her "simple plea" for calm tolerance of female impurity, Atwood realized that she *did* want to be explicitly disconcerting, especially in her treatment of women. She had always been impatient with the reassuring assumption at work in "women's novels": "you get the power by getting the man." Now she was ready to turn up the heat. What happens if you really shove men to the sidelines, and pit women more directly against women? What if you give them, in other words,

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the chance to show themselves "tough with men, hard with women," just like the male heroes whom men, according to Atwood, favor? The victims then experience the ultimate jolt: they have no choice but to confront themselves as victimizers—of their own kind.

The Robber Bride fits in as a kind of contemporary purgatory between the pre-feminist hell of *Cat's Eye* and the post-feminist puritanical "paradise" of *The Handmaid's Tale* (1986). The new novel is plainly meant to pack the most timely and intemperate punch. Here misogyny is on shameless parade as never before; and rather than emphasizing the insecure underside of the predatory style, Atwood now seems readier to push its liberating potential. That intra-female cruelty has become a center-stage spectacle should come as little surprise. Despite its ostensibly more peripheral place in the previous two books, Atwood's obsession with the double-edged drama of female victimization has been plain all along.

The Handmaid's Tale derives its interest less from its dystopian politics than from its menacing dissection of female psychology. Atwood imagines an orthodox feminist nightmare—a brave new world in which the religious right has seized power, consigning women to the role of reproductive chattel. But her heart doesn't seem to be in matters of state or in the male sex, the external monsters: the Commanders are too inconsequential (and too fond of non-procreative sex) to inspire terror. The real iciness is in the subordinate monsters; in this fertility-obsessed state, females are key collaborators as well as incubators. Atwood is most fascinated by, and riveting about, the puritanical "woman's culture" of Gilead, which runs on coercive, competitive, manipulative, deeply suspicious and even sadistic relations among its women. Beneath the repressive urge lurks a lust for power.

In *Cat's Eye*, Atwood's portrait of women's cruelty to women takes place in the past, and in a Kunstlerroman. Elaine Risley, a painter, has come back to her hometown of Toronto for a retrospective in her honor at a trendy women's gallery, and she is besieged by memories of her youth during the '40s and '50s. While the curator spouts clichés about Risley's deconstruction of male oppression, the true disturbing core of her inspiration is revealed: Elaine's preadolescent experience of brutal degradation at the hands of her "best friends." Atwood mercilessly exposes the perverse psychology of female bullying, which reverses the male-style dominance of brute over twerp: among girls, the confident child is reduced to self-doubting victim by her insecure peers. That the authority they wield is transparently precarious, even ridiculous, only makes it more overpowering. In acutely realistic detail, Atwood evokes the thrall of immature torture. Elaine's ordeal is melodramatic because it needs to be.

The same can't be said of the latest installment of Atwood's enterprise, which is meant to be satiric in its tale of women's woes. In *The Robber Bride* Atwood sets sexual and sentimental adventures into the hortatory frame of fable, gambling that she can turn the resulting melodrama to her own sophisticated ends. Her plan is apparently to subvert the typically histrionic saga of weak women and their travails by substituting strong women in their place. But the novel, despite its savvy, gets trapped by the coy conventions it means to explode. Here Atwood has succeeded in being truly disconcerting: in her iconoclastic quest to probe women's dark and idiosyncratic natures, she has produced a character who could be crowned Best Villainess on the Soap Opera Awards show, and a supporting cast that might make a clean sweep in the Best Stereotypes category.

What has happened? Atwood has started out with newly stark premises: "women, in every single role" that really counts, a villainess who can make any man or any woman succumb and an overtly satiric style that implies a more explicitly didactic "message" than she has yet delivered. In short, it looks as though Atwood aims this time to challenge with unmistakable clarity the familiar "oppression made me do it" justification for female malevolence: women must acknowledge that they choose, they are not forced, to be good or evil, subservient or independent in spirit; and they must recognize that the decisive influences on those choices are as likely to be female as male.

Yet her plot line depends for its momentum and suspense on the old dynamic she derided in women's novels: "you get the power by getting the man. The man is the power." To be sure, Atwood intends to have fun with that chestnut. Zenia, the arch villain, is the classic temptress of men, but with a twist. Her own interest in seduction has nothing to do with sex, or love, or power over men; it has only to do with her desire for predatory power over women. She wants to upend the lives of the friends from whom she has stolen her bedmates. Similarly, each of her three victims, Tony, Charis and Roz, operates on the old-fashioned assumption that her man is

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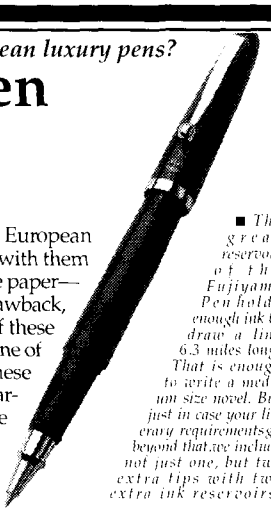

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the key to the authority she manages to convey in the world. Again, there is a twist: in having their men stolen, they are scripted to find that they have power on their own, independent strength that they never would have recognized had they not been wised-up by Zenia and seen their men dumbed-down by her.

This clever bad-fairy-tale framework, subversive and didactic at the same time, gives Atwood the chance to showcase her gift for mock-portentous caricature, for knowing when and how to dilute near-allegory with sharp comedy, here the bitchier the better. But Atwood has never totally abandoned realism before, and she isn't ready to now. For all her broadbrush verve, she is plainly also attempting to offer full-fledged characters and a semblance of suspense. Yet *The Robber Bride* is evidence that she can't have it both ways quite as effortlessly as she hopes. Striving for revelations about female agency, Atwood has come up with an uncharacteristically mechanistic plot and protagonists who turn out to be the sort of extreme clichés against which she has always rebelled: Zenia is the larger-than-life Siren, and Tony, Charis and Roz are three variations on the traumatized survivor.

Zenia's status as awe-inspiring malefactor, on which *The Robber Bride* depends, is enjoyably incredible—when she's dealing with men. After all, when sex is at stake, preposterous subterfuge is often the name of the game: as Richard III (to whom one reviewer has compared Zenia) showed in his wooing of Anne, villains on the make can get away with the most outrageously low-grade guile. Zenia is thus an appropriately unsubtle insult to men; she crudely aims at the crotch and the cash, and when she's finished unzipping all the pockets of her poor prey, she moves on. "Believe me, there's only one thing any man ever wants from a woman, and that's sex. How much you can get them to pay for it is the important thing."

It's in her dealings with women that the standards for villainy become more taxing. Same-sex torture among adults requires insidious, treacherous empathy—true Iago-style imagination of another's frailties. But Atwood makes the task disappointingly simple by giving Tony, Roz and Charis caricatured insecurities—they want, respectively, a heart, courage and a brain—and by allowing Zenia to exploit their naïveté shamelessly and schematically. The lies with which Zenia lures each woman into her confidence are the kind that "any 12-year-old with an active imagination [would] have been able to make up," as Tony later reflects. The gullibility of all three of them, since it can't be ascribed to testosterone, looks more like stupidity—or else like formulaic fantasy: Zenia as the predictable projection of each woman's subconscious.

The resulting "friendships" are transparently fragile, and also sociologically facile. Tony, who first meets Zenia in the 1960s at the University of Toronto, is easily the most compelling of the three dupes. But even she verges uncomfortably on type—the nerdy, emotionally inept loner—and her Zenia adventure almost gets reduced to an illustrative drama of the decade: Tony succumbs to Zenia out of hunger for any semblance of sisterhood in the not yet self-consciously feminist era. Charis is the spacey, New Age figure who gets bamboozled by Zenia's seemingly needy aura in a yoga class in the more holistic '70s. Roz, the edgy editor of *WiseWomanWorld*, gets snookered by a daringly independent Zenia in the assertive '80s.

Nor is the threesome's easy seduction justified by the ostensibly hard questions with which they are then confronted: Why are they so susceptible to ploys like Zenia's? And how do they respond to the phenomenon of Zenia once they discover her true stripes, which they do when the tigress promptly pounces on their men? For the answers Atwood provides turn out to sound remarkably orthodox and old-fashioned. The clue to her women's vulnerability—and to her villain's malevolence—is victimization. Each character in turn recalls a spectacular tale of youthful abuse and dislocation suffered at the hands of parents and relatives.

At first it seems the sob stories are meant to be satiric. In Zenia's case, the irony is sustained, which only helps ensure that she remains a cliché. Telling one outlandish lie after another about her past, she is established as the destructively powerful woman who is motiveless, inhuman. Like Zenia's, the other women's sagas have outsized dimensions. Yet each of them sticks soberly to one traumatic tale, and as the stories unfold, Atwood can't resist taking them seriously. Since melodrama can work well enough with youthful heroines, she manages to make the girls' fates unexpectedly poignant—which rather than complicating Roz, Tony and Charis only compartmentalizes them further: they represent a neat spectrum of pitiable female sufferers.

All three of them do in the end stand up to Zenia, thus getting the chance to prove that they are not the pure "Solitary Weeper" type, whom Atwood has dismissively described as "the female victim to whom everything gets done and whose only activity is running away." When Zenia, whose funeral they have all attended, suddenly walks into the Toxique, the restaurant where the trio regularly meets over lunch to reminisce about their old nemesis, they are in shock—and then they act. But the terms of their reckoning with the villainess, and by extension with themselves, once again are not exactly stereotype-shattering. All along their meditations about Zenia have centered on her preternatural power over men, not her hold over women. The old mystery of the temptress is still, when all is said and done, at the heart of the story: What is it that their men find so devastatingly irresistible about her? That voyeuristic obsession can't help eclipsing their meditations about their own less titillating selves. ("If it were a plant," Tony muses about her love life, "it would be a fern.")

Their conclusions are conventional: Zenia's magic is sex. "She was raw," Tony decides, "she was raw sex, whereas Tony herself was only the cooked variety. Parboiled to get the dangerous wildness out, the strong fresh-blood flavors." None of the men (who remain minor figures throughout) offers any corroboration for that view, but Zenia screechingly confirms it. And she thinks she knows how to make it really hurt: when she is confronted at the end by each of her victims in turn, she doesn't trumpet her own gifts in bed; instead she brutally reports back what she has supposedly learned of their inadequacies there, from pillow-talk with their men. "Sleeping with Roz was like getting into bed with a cement mixer"; making love with Tony "must be like fucking a gerbil!"; as for Charis, "[Billy] thought having sex with you was like porking a turnip."

The culminating face-offs don't rise much above that level. Tony, Roz and Charis are able to shrug off Zenia's adolescent taunts, but only just. It's fitting that Atwood doesn't reward their ordeals with sudden subtle wisdom, but what triumph she dispenses seems overly condescending. They don't become villainesses, but they haven't become very worldly in more lawful ways either—except that they are willing to admit to themselves, sometimes, that their men are real wash-outs.

Satiric treatments often have a way of reducing characters to childlike dimensions, and Atwood's women all along have had the mannered air of girls playing dress-up, sometimes quite literally. (Zenia of course is all disguise, her silicone implants the subject of considerable sniggering among the other women.) That must have been part of the appeal for Atwood of launching a satire, and it's clearly by design that the climax of this jauntily moralizing tale takes the form of

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a juvenile confrontation. For Atwood has emphasized that outgrowing the victim mentality is a slow, unsteady process of maturing. Until society has changed significantly, the most you can hope for is that individuals within it will "refuse to accept the assumption that the role [of victim] is inevitable."

Atwood has pointed toward a higher stage, reserved for what she has labeled the "creative non-victim." But it's an oddly euphemistic, cautious designation for the strident and dark liberation that she has indicated she expects for and from women; and in *The Robber Bride* she seems a little hesitant in welcoming its arrival, for all that she has sounded the call for more Lady Macbeths. A self-respecting villainess, or even an ordinary schemer after power and pleasure, will need bolder credentials than that to do real business. •

Applied Scientist

By Paul Boyer

James B. Conant: Harvard to Hiroshima and the Making of the Nuclear Age by James G. Hershberg

(Knopf, 948 pp., $35)

The title of James Bryant Conant's autobiography, *My Several Lives*, suggests his varied and somewhat Horatio Alger-like career: middle-class boyhood in the unfashionable Boston suburb of Dorchester; rapid rise at Harvard from scholarship student to professor of chemistry to president; government official at the center of American nuclear policy-making from 1940 to 1952; American high commissioner and then ambassador to Germany; and finally, at an age when most people would have been subscribing to *Modern Maturity*, author of two influential reports on America's high schools. Now James G. Hershberg offers what must surely rank, by sheer comprehensiveness and bulk, as Conant's definitive biography. The book is massively documented from Conant's diaries and letters, interviews with family members and associates and a wealth of secondary sources. The result is a far more textured picture than one finds in Conant's own guarded and unrevealing autobiography.

Readers be warned: this is a long book. Proceeding at the leisurely pace of a Victorian novel, 768 pages of text give way to 140 pages of notes that often include additional discussion or quotations. At times I had the weird feeling that the book was actually growing longer as I read it. I even experienced a certain selfish relief as the aging Conant declined physically and mentally: the biography, too, must soon end. It is demoralizing, after pages of detailed material, to encounter a sentence on the order of: "But these were minor issues compared to the important subject that now occupied Conant's attention." This book, then, is rather a classic instance of comprehensiveness run rampant, simply because the documentation exists. Still, it is an important and rewarding book. For the persevering reader it will illuminate many significant matters, such as the politics of higher education, the evolution of American nuclear policy from the 1940s to the 1960s, the expanding role of science in modern life and the workings of a key network of men who profoundly influenced American foreign policy in these decades.

Conant became president of Harvard in 1933, after a dreary interval in which the institution, having been brought into the modern era by Charles William Eliot during a forty-year presidency (1869-1909), had rusticated under "bigoted, racist and priggish" A. Lawrence Lowell. Though Conant voted, as a young assistant professor in 1922, for a resolution favored by Lowell (and introduced by Conant's uncle-in-law, a professor of biochemistry) that would have established an explicit Jewish quota at Harvard, this did not presage his future course. As president he repudiated quotas, jousted with well-heeled WASP alumni and worked to make Harvard a truly meritocratic school. Convinced that even "the most collegiate and football-mad" alumni had some "spark of intellectual interest," he labored to fan that spark. As a board member of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching he advocated standardized tests for college admissions; and these tests, though they were criticized later, originated in a laudable impulse to broaden access to higher education.

Asserting control over the tenure process, Conant made enemies. In the "Walsh-Sweezy" controversy, he terminated two radical economics instructors active in the Harvard teachers' union, and he fired twelve English instructors simultaneously—to avoid drawing invidious distinctions among them, he said. Social scientists rightly eyed him with particular wariness; Conant did not bother to conceal his suspicion that their disciplines might be "the modern equivalents of astrology."

His most controversial years at Harvard came as the anti-Communist witch-hunt crested in the early 1950s. Conant eloquently championed academic freedom, criticized loyalty oaths and defended Harvard radicals such as the literary critic F. O. Matthiessen, the Sinologist John K. Fairbank and the astronomer Harlow Shapley (smeared by Joe McCarthy in a garbled attack on "Howard Shipley"). Standing up to right-wingers on Harvard's governing board, he backed tenure and promotion for the iconoclastic economist John Kenneth Galbraith. In 1954, when J. Robert Oppenheimer's loyalty came under attack, Conant flew home from his diplomatic post in Bonn to testify on his friend's behalf, despite Secretary of State Dulles's disapproval.

But Hershberg documents another side of Conant's role in these years. He acquiesced in the forced resignation of the young radical historian H. Stuart Hughes from Harvard's Russian Research Center, under pressure from the Center's underwriter, the Carnegie Corporation. In 1949 he insisted that scientists should be denied security clearance if "a shadow of a doubt" existed about their loyalty—a stringent test that returned to haunt him when Oppenheimer faced attack. As leader of the Educational Policies Commission of the National Education Association, he persuaded the NEA to espouse the barring of Communist Party members from the teaching profession. He even insisted that schools should dismiss faculty members who pleaded the Fifth Amendment before congressional committees or refused to name associates suspected of C.P. ties. For these actions, Conant received withering criticism from Zechariah Chafee and other champions of free speech on the Harvard faculty. Though he offers no smoking gun, Hershberg finds plausible the charge advanced by Sigmund Diamond in his book *Compromised Campus* that Conant secretly cooperated with FBI snoopers investigating Harvard students and faculty.

The focus of Hershberg's work,

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though, is Conant's public career, especially his role in nuclear decision-making, and this indeed is what gives Conant's story its larger historical interest. Conant entered federal science administration at the top, in 1940, when he became deputy to Vannevar Bush, dean of engineering at MIT, in the National Defense Research Committee (NDRC), the federal agency charged with recruiting scientists for military research. In 1941 Conant succeeded Bush as NDRC director, while becoming his deputy on the newly formed Office of Scientific Research and Development. And as head of that office's "S-1" section, Conant had primary responsibility for atomic bomb research.

Even after September 1942, when the Manhattan Project passed to the military command of Gen. Leslie R. Groves, Conant closely monitored developments. In May 1945 President Truman appointed him to the nine-member Interim Committee, the top-secret body chaired by Secretary of War Stimson to advise the president on atomic matters. In this capacity he helped to formulate the advice to Truman to drop the bomb, despite gathering opposition from James Franck and other Manhattan Project scientists at the University of Chicago. He even suggested the ideal target: "a vital war plant employing a large number of workers and closely surrounded by workers' houses." After the war, as a member of the Atomic Energy Commission's General Advisory Committee (GAC), his central role in nuclear policy-making continued.

Hershberg's account of these events is illuminating on several counts. He underscores again how completely the fear of a German atomic bomb initially fueled the American project, and how radically the picture altered with Germany's defeat and the realization that Hitler had not, after all, made the bomb a high priority. The people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were the unwitting victims of a defensive crash program that had initially not focused on Japan at all. As for Conant's role in advising the use of the bomb against a Japan already on the brink of defeat, his later justifications, as reported by Hershberg, are remarkable for their bland superficiality. He never engaged the complex issues that the bomb decision posed.

Conant simply contended, like Truman, that the bomb "helped win the war" and "saved American lives." The record reveals, however, that the Interim Committee made its recommendation to Truman on May 31, reaffirmed it on June 21 and did not reconsider it, despite the rapidly evolving military and diplomatic situation that summer, as Japan's capacity to resist crumbled and Tokyo sent out urgent peace-feelers. Though the planned invasion was still months away, a pause for a serious diplomatic effort to end the war was never seriously considered. One is left, in Conant's case, with the sense of a policy-maker retroactively justifying his position rather than a man seriously confronting the troubling questions that continue to swirl around Truman's action.

To the familiar justifications for using the bomb Conant added one that has perhaps been underestimated by historians: its utility in promoting the international control of atomic energy after the war. Though Leo Szilard and Niels Bohr have been credited with first offering international control proposals, Hershberg shows that as early as May 1944 Conant was independently drafting an international control plan, which he saw as "the only hope for humanity." While Gar Alperovitz and others have advanced the now familiar argument that the bomb decision reflected in part the Truman administration's desire to influence postwar Soviet behavior, Conant stressed another theme: that dropping the bomb on a crowded city would demonstrate its horror in the most dramatic possible way, and thereby facilitate the postwar international control effort. Whatever the morality of this end-justifies-the-means argument, it has a certain perverse Machiavellian power. In the decades that followed, indeed, a succession of campaigns for international control, for a test ban and for a nuclear freeze all effectively used the actual devastation of two cities to build support for their cause.

Firmly secular despite a Swedenborgian upbringing, Conant generally eschewed religious or moral reflection. He disdained the atomic scientists who "paraded their sense of guilt" after the war. Nevertheless, he justified his World War II role (as well as his World War I involvement in poison-gas research and production) on the grounds that war creates its own unique ethical framework: "War is always totally different morally from peace," he insisted in 1949. In light of such views, it is unsurprising that Conant dismissed those he invariably labeled "professional pacifists." But it is disconcerting that he showed no awareness of the Catholic just-war doctrine, which holds that even in wartime moral tests must continue to inform the belligerents' actions and decisions. He will never be recalled as one who thought profoundly about the ethics of war. His moral theorizing, such as it was, seems little more than rationalization after the bloodstained fact.

Still, if he had no doubts about Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Conant's views on postwar nuclear issues were profoundly ambivalent. He dismissed inflated claims for the peacetime uses of atomic energy, correctly foreseeing an eventual public revulsion against nuclear power. As for atomic weapons, the failure of the international control effort dismayed him, and well after the Truman administration had abandoned the cause he urged continued negotiations, advocating what later activists would call a nuclear freeze.

After the Soviet A-bomb test in September 1949, Conant, with Oppenheimer, persuaded the GAC unanimously to advise the AEC against development of the hydrogen bomb. (Two members, Enrico Fermi and I. I. Rabi, made their votes contingent on Moscow's willingness to renounce the H-bomb as well.) Having earlier defended the morality of the atomic bomb, Conant now explicitly couched his opposition to the hydrogen bomb in ethical terms: its potential for devastating civilian populations was too great. David Lilienthal, the chairman of the AEC, describing the debates in a diary entry, recalled Conant "looking almost translucent, so grey."

Birdham

Hemmed by loud seas,
by fractured granite, by island
treescapes each spined like a hedgehog,
as well as wild roses' formidable
coppices, on beholding
an up-late-in-daylight
porcupine, its thicketed
shambling perpendicular a stupor
of armament, I thought

of Birdham, all meek horizontals,
blurred margins, sea meeting land
among lanes and hedgerows:
of mild, tall, approachable
roses and delphiniums, a robin
scavenging the tablecloth at
teatime: of exclaiming, one evening,
"Barbara, there's a hedgehog
out in the garden!"

"Oh," my friend complacently
said then, "That's Henry."
Far-off, long-settled
Birdham is like that.

AMY CLAMPITT

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While Conant fought the H-bomb with "an unusual degree of passion," he did not go public with his opposition. As he wrote a friend, he and Oppenheimer "did not want to do anything that seemed to indicate we were not good soldiers...." Not until his GAC term expired in August 1952, three years after the H-bomb defeat, did Conant end all official connection with nuclear policy-making. Yet this accomplished insider did master the hidden-hand art of molding public opinion. Between 1945 and 1947 he confronted mounting criticism of the decision to use the atomic bomb not only from "professional pacifists" and others prone to "sentimentalism," but from influential figures such as Lewis Mumford, Norman Cousins and even the sober analysts of the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey. Conant was stung when John Hersey's powerful *Hiroshima* appeared in *The New Yorker* on August 31, 1946. He dismissed such criticism as Monday-morning quarterbacking, and took comfort in the fact that the "vast body of American opinion" still supported Truman's (and his) position.

This latter argument is ironic in view of the fact, amply documented by Hershberg, that Conant worked assiduously to influence the same "American opinion" that he cited to defend his wartime role. At the popular level, in 1946, Conant (and his alter-ego, Bush) played a key role in shaping a "March of Time" newsreel on the Manhattan Project, even lying prone on a dirt-filled set in Cambridge for a re-enactment of the Alamogordo test. The documentary, they hoped, would both justify the A-bomb project and build support for the cause of international control. Conant was also close to a group of public figures, including Bush, Walter Lippmann, John J. McCloy and various atomic scientists who maneuvered behind the scenes to shape *The Beginning or the End*, the 1947 MGM movie about the Manhattan Project. This spectacularly bad film was a box office dud, but prior to its release interested parties feverishly tried to influence its interpretations, with scant regard for historical accuracy. (Louis B. Mayer had no problem with inventing history; as he wrote to Albert Einstein, "Dramatic truth is just as compelling a requirement on us as veritable truth is on a scientist.")

Conant also inspired the single most influential early salvo in the campaign to rebut critics of Truman's action, Henry Stimson's "The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb," which appeared in *Harper's* in February 1947. This essay, aimed at school teachers and other opinion-molders, brilliantly achieved its polemical purpose by gliding past issues that would have complicated its tale, including the Allies' unconditional surrender demand, Japan's virtual military collapse and peace-feelers and Stalin's pledge at Yalta to declare war on Japan within three months of Germany's surrender, that is, by early August 1945. It has long been known that McGeorge Bundy, the son of Stimson's wartime aide Harvey Bundy, ghost-wrote much of Stimson's piece, but Hershberg more fully documents Conant's central role in inspiring and editing it.

For Conant, Hershberg makes clear, sustaining public support for the decision to drop the bomb was important not only for his own reputation, but also for its relevance to postwar nuclear decision-making. He rightly saw a direct connection between public approval of Truman's action and backing for Washington's cold war policies, which he was helping to shape. Overall, this brief phase of Conant's career, well told by Hershberg, offers a highly instructive case study in the machinations of an earlier generation of spin doctors.

From a broader perspective, Conant's career, paired with that of Bush, exemplified the emergence of science and science administrators as political and social forces in modern life. Conant's postwar influence in many realms of public policy arose from his wartime achievement in mobilizing the scientific community. The Manhattan Project, which was eerily foreshadowed in a 1918 poison-gas project that Conant headed, set the stage for what Hershberg calls "the militarization of American science" in the cold war. Subtly exploiting the aura of technological wizardry that surrounded their leadership in wartime science, especially in the Manhattan Project, politicized scientists like Conant and Bush moved to the very center of postwar policy-making.

Still, on this issue as on others, Conant had mixed feelings. As early as 1936, speaking at Harvard's tercentenary ceremonies, he described fascism as part of a global upsurge of anti-intellectualism rooted in fears of rapid technological change. The theme resurfaced after the war. Conant clearly enjoyed the access to power that his role as a science administrator had given him, but he deplored the popular notion of science's inexorable advance and of scientists as wonder-workers, and his book *On Understanding Science* (1947), based on a Harvard course of the same title that he taught for several years, tried to debunk such myths. In *Science and Common Sense* (1951) he criticized the assumption that scientists' technical skills gave them particular insights into public policy issues—even though his own postwar career was rooted in this very belief. By the mid-1950s, George Kistiakowsky later recalled, Conant had privately concluded that "scientists [and] engineers were doing harmful things to the country by pushing technology too much."

Conant's career also sheds light on the nature and exercise of power in American public life since World War II. He exemplified what has been variously called the old-boy network, the power elite, the establishment and—in earlier, more innocent days—"disinterested public service." The issues, titles and venues varied, but Conant's tight circle of well-connected public figures endured. They moved easily from behind-the-scenes advising to appointive office. (The only thing surprising about Dean Acheson's offer of a diplomatic post to Conant is the latter's school-girlish diary reaction: "Dean asked me to be the new ambassador to Germany!!! Was I surprised.")

Like all elites, this elite experienced internal tensions, rivalries and occasional ideological conflicts. Conant often clashed with the Boston Brahmins who controlled the Harvard Corporation, and on nuclear issues the key protagonists could espouse sharply divergent positions. Conant's advice carried most weight when it re-enforced the broader tendency of cold war thinking. When it diverged, as when he continued to push for international control of atomic weapons in 1947 or opposed the H-bomb in 1949, he would find himself temporarily out of the loop.

Nor was this establishment all-

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powerful. The shaping of public policy is not an exact science. Conant and his cold war allies, for example, never managed to achieve a favorite goal: two years of mandatory military service for all young men. Other pressure groups, including the American Friends Service Committee, mounted a strong countercampaign, and the mandarins' effort failed. Conant's pursuits amply document the existence of a foreign policy establishment, but they also undermine simplistic notions about its cohesiveness, its unity or its omnipotence.

Messy as it was, however, the reality of the power-wielding process is clear. One is struck in Hershberg's account by how little Conant concerned himself with the electoral or legislative processes that, according to the civics textbooks, lie at the heart of American democracy. Elections came and went, Congress debated and Conant barely noticed. He was operating at a different level, where policy emerged from closed-door meetings and "public opinion" was then manufactured to support that policy. From the 1930s to the 1960s, he lent his prestige to a succession of "committees" that were in reality just propaganda fronts by which notables and dignitaries influenced Americans to support an interventionist foreign policy. These included the pre-war Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies; the Committee for the Marshall Plan; the Committee on the Present Danger (founded and chaired by Conant in 1950 to generate support for NATO, the deployment of American troops in Europe, universal military service and the National Security Council's hawkish cold war blueprint, NSC-68); the Committee to Strengthen the Frontiers of Freedom, chaired by Bush to fortify Americans for continued anti-Soviet militance; and finally the Committee for Peace and Freedom in Vietnam, which propagandized for Lyndon Johnson's policies.

Ostensibly private initiatives by concerned citizens, these "committees" worked hand-in-glove with a succession of administrations. Despite nagging private doubts, from the H-bomb to Vietnam, Conant's orientation toward authority and toward power remained a central impulse of his career. The underlying message of all these organizations was clear: our leaders know best, so trust them. Like Alexander Hamilton ("Your people, sir, is a great beast"), Conant distrusted Americans in the mass, either when they tended toward pacifism or toward panicky bellicose solutions. He favored a meritocratic educational system that would train the gifted and assimilate them into the governing class, but otherwise he saw the American population less as a source of democratic renewal than as a dangerous and unreliable—but fortunately malleable—social force.

In retrospect, the worldview around which Conant ceaselessly tried to rally public opinion seems simplistic and parochial. From 1950 on, for reasons never entirely clear, he was certain that only massive military deterrence prevented the Red Army from marching to the English Channel. And like many other cold warriors, he had little interest in Asia, Africa or Latin America except as arenas of superpower conflict. Needless to say, this perspective prepared him poorly for Vietnam. By 1970, the stark cold war polarities that Conant had helped to create were blurring. Beneath his public backing of the Vietnam War lay an ideological disorientation. He denounced the antiwar protesters as "a fanatical group of anarchists," yet, indignant at the Watergate break-in and Nixon's educational policies, he voted for McGovern in 1972.

And what of Conant the man? Here Hershberg goes far beyond *My Several Lives*, with its "Maginot Line of caution, propriety and reticence." (Only at his editor's insistence did Conant's memoir mention his marriage.) Though Hershberg, too, concentrates on the public realm, he also provides extended glimpses of Conant's private life, including his marriage to Patty Richards, the daughter of his Harvard mentor, chemistry professor Theodore Richards (the academic equivalent of marrying the boss's daughter). Patty Conant enjoyed the social aspects of her role yet chafed at its frustrations. Morbidly introspective, she suffered bouts of psychosomatic illness, and in old age ripped many pages of "lonely, lachrymose broodings" from her diary. In one notebook she copied a poignant passage from Thoreau: "At what expense any valuable work is performed! At the expense of a life!" Hershberg also documents Conant's troubled relations with his two sons, one of whom suffered a severe psychiatric disorder that resulted in two broken marriages and required intermittent institutionalization.

A self-described "cold, reserved New Englander," Conant admonished himself when he was a Harvard freshman: "Smile, damn it, *smile*!!" Of the Russian people he wrote admiringly in 1945: "No foolishness in this nation. Nothing soft." Possessing "a disciplined ability to suppress emotion and spontaneity," he presented a public image of focused energy, unbending will and total self-assurance—something of an anachronism in a post-war America teeming with David Riesman's eager-to-please "other directed" personalities. Indeed, his stern and formal manner probably helps account for his influence. He seemed the sort of man whom you should take seriously.

And yet Hershberg's Conant is a man who bled when pricked. His diaries record hopes, qualms, irritation and despair that he kept firmly to himself. It was on page 754 (and not until page 754) that I finally mustered a sense of human fellow-feeling with the man. In July 1965 he and his wife were both hospitalized in New York: he for heart trouble and she for cancer surgery. On July 7, after his release, he visited Patty before her operation, ate a lonely meal in the hospital cafeteria and that night scrawled in his diary: "What a *terrible* day. I am now the visitor who worries, not the patient. Sick at heart.... The First Day of Winter for the Conant family!" The next day he added: "Second day of winter. Winter came on fast!"

Ironically, though, what finally seems most appealing in Conant was precisely the steely reserve that his family, friends and associates found so problematic. He viewed the world with a minimum of sentiment and a clear-eyed skepticism. Unswayed by the pretensions of science or the illusions of progress, he still regarded reason as humankind's best hope, and never succumbed to the science-bashing or the mushy New Age maunderings that would seduce so many after his time. A latter-day stoic, his austere sense of duty and his underlying fatalism make it no wonder that his favorite theologian was Reinhold Niebuhr. Conant liked to quote Emerson's essay "The Law of Compensation":

> With every influx of light comes new danger.... There is a crack in every thing God has made..., this vindictive circumstance stealing in unawares..., this backstroke, this kick of the gun, certifying ... that in nature nothing can be given, all things are sold.

For the most part, he believed, life consists of "making the best of an inevitable bargain, however hard."

Conant led a remarkable and eventful life in remarkable and eventful times. James Hershberg has explored that life, and those times, in exhaustive and revealing detail. Anyone interested in seriously engaging the central issues of the recent American past could do worse than to explore this vast volume.

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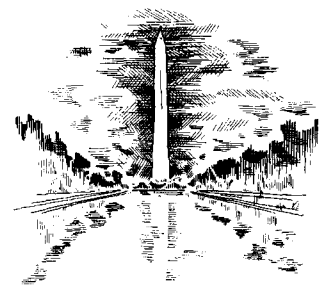
WASHINGTON DIARIST

War stories

LEAVING EUROPE AND RETURNING to the United States, I thought, meant putting Bosnia behind me. Obviously, it's not going to be that simple. Just about every journalist who went there, even for a short time, came back somehow shaken. Another American correspondent who spent much more time in that country than I did recently told me of the price he had paid in insomnia and depression: there was so much horror, so much personal risk—and so little evidence that the coverage was helping to prompt action to stop the war. "The media did their job in Bosnia," he shrugged. "We were probably the only international institution that did."

IT WAS WITH THIS BACKGROUND in mind that I read "Dateline Yugoslavia: The Partisan Press," a twenty-page article by Peter Brock in the Winter 1993 edition of *Foreign Policy*. Brock, billed as a "special projects and politics editor" at the El Paso *Herald-Post*, accuses the media of tilting its coverage against the Serbs in order to bring on foreign intervention to save the Bosnians. There is legitimate room for self-examination by the press about its performance in the supercharged Bosnian ethnic atmosphere. Brock is probably right, for instance, that too many reporters quoted the Bosnian government's patently unconfirmable claim that 50,000 Muslim women were raped by the Serbs. Many reporters became emotionally involved in the story; understandably, the overwhelming preponderance of Serb abuses as compared with those by the Muslims led some of us to hope that the West would ride to the rescue. Like honest reporters on other dramatic stories, most of the press corps in Bosnia strove to temper emotion with fact. History will decide how successful they were.

BUT HOW FAIR IS BROCK'S CRItique? He accuses the press of ignoring "many credible reports" that Bosnians "frequently" fired on their own people, specifically chiding Pulitzer Prize-winner John Burns of *The New York Times* for blaming the Sarajevo bread line massacre of May 27, 1992, on the Serbs "a year after some U.N. officials acknowledged that Muslims ... set off explosives that killed twenty-two civilians." TNR readers will recognize this as the canard demolished by National Public Radio correspondent Tom Gjelten (see "Blaming the Victim," December 20, 1993). The false charge that Bosnian forces staged the massacre originated with Serb military officers who relayed it to former U.N. commander Maj. Gen. Lewis MacKenzie of Canada, who then spread it to the media without investigating the matter himself. As readers of Gjelten's article know, MacKenzie has now backed off the accusation. Alas, Gjelten's article was published after Brock's recycling of the Serb-inspired version was already on its way to acquiring new scholarly cachet in the pages of *Foreign Policy*. When I asked Brock to identify some of the "many credible reports" upon which he based the claim, he alluded vaguely to "hundreds" of stories, including some on the Associated Press wire. A Nexis search turned up no such A.P. reports.



BROCK ALSO TAKES ON ROY GUTman, the veteran *New York Newsday* correspondent who shared the Pulitzer for foreign reporting with Burns. Brock says there are "questions" about Gutman's reports on Serb-run "death camps" in northern Bosnia. The only "questions" Brock cites, however, come from an article by Joan Phillips, whom Brock identifies only as "a British journalist," in which Phillips calls Gutman's stories "thinly sourced." Brock omits to tell his readers that, in contrast to Gutman's ample credentials, Phillips works for an obscure publication called *Living Marxism*. Brock said that Gutman "could not be contacted" to respond to Phillips, though Gutman told me on the phone that neither he nor his editors at *Newsday* were aware of any effort by Brock to get in touch with them.

BROCK WRITES THAT HE MADE "REpeated attempts" to interview John Burns; he told me this consisted of half a dozen unreturned phone calls to the *Times* bureau in Toronto, where Burns stopped briefly last summer. *Times* Foreign Editor Bernard Gwertzman told me he knows of no effort by Brock to get in touch with Burns through the foreign desk, which "could easily have been done." Indeed, Burns could have been buttonholed at the Holiday Inn in Sarajevo any day of the week. But it is unclear whether or not Brock's quest for the hidden truth about Bosnia included a visit to Sarajevo. "It's none of your business where I've been," he snapped when I asked. Later, he implied darkly that it would be too risky to reveal his precise whereabouts while in the former Yugoslavia—although Brock alludes in his article to conversations in the Serbian capital of Belgrade. In any case, he offers no fresh on-scene reporting from the Bosnian capital to set against Burns's seventeen-month oeuvre. Brock asserts that the Bosnian government "mobilized scores of handlers" to show Western journalists around Sarajevo. If this means anything, it means that at least forty Bosnian government minions were assigned the task of feeding information to the press. Having spent a total of six weeks in Sarajevo since the siege began, I have no idea what Brock is talking about. The Sarajevo government's press operation was small and amateurish; it wasn't until last summer, a full year after the siege began, that the Ministry of Information began organizing daily press conferences—which were usually boring and sparsely attended. Brock stands by his version of the bread line massacre. *Foreign Policy* Associate Editor Thomas Omestad says the journal's use of Brock's article does not mean either approval or disapproval of its specific views, just that "the editor felt the information deserved to be considered." And at a recent round of peace talks among the three parties to the Bosnia war in Geneva, members of the Serb delegation were seen passing out copies of Brock's article to mediators David Owen and Thorvald Stoltenberg, according to Gutman.

IN FACT, FOREIGN CORRESPONdents, far from being coddled by manipulative Sarajevans, have long since turned into convenient targets for people—some of them armed—seeking to vent their anger and disappointment at the West for its failure to end the siege. My scariest experience came one Sunday, when a Spanish T.V. crew and I were covering a funeral for some Muslim children who had been killed by Serb shells. Suddenly, another shell landed with a tremendous roar just seventy-five feet from the assembled crowd. I scrambled up from the ground, the nerve-jangling explosion still ringing in my ears, only to find that the mourners had turned into a mob—and they were coming for the journalists. They blamed the T.V. equipment for somehow helping the Serbs target their fire. Even if the all-powerful Western media were trying as hard, and as dishonestly, to provoke military intervention, as Peter Brock says, the real story, it would seem, is how little success that alleged effort has had.

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